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# THE HIGHEST LIFE



# THE HIGHEST LIFE

A STORY OF  
SHORTCOMINGS AND A GOAL

INCLUDING

*A FRIENDLY ANALYSIS OF THE  
KESWICK MOVEMENT*

BY

*has my*  
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IMAGINATION"

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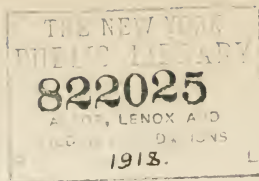
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TO  
THE REVEREND  
HENRY GRIGGS WESTON, D.D., LL.D.

*President of Crozer Theological Seminary*

WHOSE LIFE  
STRONG, WISE, DEVOUT  
HOLDS THE VENERATION AND QUICKENS  
THE EMULATION  
OF ALL HIS ASSOCIATES



## P R E F A C E

**I**T may hardly seem true, but the highest theme of practical Christianity does not necessarily involve any issue between rival theologies. This book accordingly has not been written in the interest of any theology from the most conservative to the most progressive. It takes for granted that Christianity affords its own ideal of living, that the reader would be willing to follow a discreet inquiry as to that ideal, and is wide-minded enough both to notice without contempt the mistakes of good people on this matter, and to accept with alacrity whatever they may know and can teach.

And so the aim of these pages is not controversial. Certain doctrines are indeed reviewed which one after another have cut something of a figure, and then slowly withdrawn from general notice. But these are mentioned for the sake of having the whole case before us, and

particularly on account of cheering facts in their history. One such fact is, that, so far as the great mass of Christian folk is concerned, the failure of these doctrines to meet with general agreement is shutting us up to a narrow range of disagreement about ideals of the Christian life. Another fact is that each ideal has been a step in advance of its predecessor. The last fact is, that, so far from being altogether a failure, each and every exposition of the matter has given prominence to some element in the case which must be included in any final tenet. It would be a reversal of all history if devout souls had utterly thrown away their pains, and had reached entirely wrong conclusions about the best living. It is but fair to add that the leading doctrines on this subject have been accompanied, in some at least of their advocates, by graces of character, and even of manners, so winning as to prove a far more persuasive recommendation than all argument.

So, then, the story of untenable opinions looks towards an unity of conviction without regard to sect, which in its turn will strengthen,



we may hope, aspiration for the best that Christianity can do for us. The present aim is to make plain, through an historical sketch and an exposition of views congruous with the spirit of our age, that we may now agree, to larger extent than is popularly supposed, as to what is the Highest Life, and may in some measure secure mutual support in the struggle toward it.

CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,  
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I

## SHORTCOMINGS



# THE HIGHEST LIFE

## I

### SHORTCOMINGS

#### SECTION I.—HINDRANCES AND HELPS

**W**HAT is the Highest Life? is a question to which no answer has been agreed upon. We are still farther from agreement as to how it may be attained. It crowns all that God does for us; but the work of the Spirit of God in man is more in need of study than any other matter of like importance. The study faces a singular complex of hindrance and help. It is hindered by the impossibility of bringing God under observation. He is not before the senses, and he is not within our inner consciousness. It should need only to be mentioned that we have no consciousness of two persons within our breast. It is our own spirit that thinks, loves, trusts, adores, resolves, in a word, does all of which we are inly aware. And so the door is wide open to conjecture, but closed to inspection.

The almost oddly contrasted help is that, while we cannot see God at work, we can see his works. "The fruits of the Spirit" all men know. They are abundant and characteristic; not, to be sure, so characteristic as to remove at once every doubt as to the source of what goes on within us, but still characteristic enough, upon the whole, to be in impressive contrast with the doings of a bad spirit, human or, if you will, satanic.

This is an advantage hardly shared to the same extent by any other Christian doctrine. In the long run, it is true, all religious doctrines are either recommended or discredited by experience, but no other so promptly as this one. Somebody puts forward a new idea of the Highest Life, or how it is to be reached; and at once people in plenty are eager to test the new idea. The rest of us look on to see how it works. And so, when the result is disappointing, when experience seems to have refuted the latest theory, that theory is cast aside not by the decree of a few conservative and timid scholars, but by the general verdict of ordinary Christians.

The concurrence of majorities in this matter, however, is hardly to be looked upon as an un-



mixed good. One frequent result is not less than a disaster. A widespread revulsion of feeling follows when any widely advertised scheme of spiritual betterment fails. And this revulsion is not against the rejected plan alone, but against all endeavor for the uplift of Christian living. Discouragement and indifference settle like a fog-bank on the face of the sea. Nothing is in sight to sail from or sail to, to seek or to avoid. What is more dreadful in spiritual affairs than apathy? How is it in the churches to-day? Is there at this moment any prevailing view about the improvement of Christian living which could be used to wake up and keep alive the general interest? The ordinary view is simple enough. It is that we ought to be good, and that, if we pray to be good and try to be good, God will no doubt help us to become better. But it would be hard to mould into persuasive appeals material as colorless as this.

Nevertheless, unmistakable as is the disregard for higher Christian ideals, and unmistakably due as this disregard in large part is to failure of the programmes for realizing those ideals, some compensation may still be found in the fact

that the schemes which have once openly failed will hardly win much attention again. They leave the field clear for other claimants, and other claimants are pushing their advantage. So the matter stands to-day.

But in all the thoughts and plans for the Highest Life which have been in turn the objects of assured faith, of glowing hope, of absorbed effort, and of delight all but delirious for the few, yet which have proved a disappointment to the vast and formless multitude, the multitude which is so quick to respond but so slowly convinced, so nimble to sympathize but so inert to obey, in all these plans and ideas is there nothing at all for us of positive instruction, of clear, clean gain? Can we gather no fruitage except discouragement from all this earnest coveting of the best gifts, this enthusiastic striving to be ourselves to our generation the best gift? Is there no thought upon the matter to which all good Christians will assent, and which at the same time is potent for the uplift of them all? We can see clearly what shining but delusive pyrites crystals have been dug up with pains and exhibited with joy; but has not all this absorbed

and toilsome mining left with us some golden bequest of "durable riches and righteousness"? The story of it all may tell.

One caution is needed in entering upon this subject; for we are exposed to a subtle mistake both as to the highest life and the measures for reaching it. Such a life is so superior to the ordinary Christian life in what it gives up and in what it takes on, in the reversal of likings and transformation of disposition, so ineffably superior in its intimacy with God and its help from God, as apparently to involve on His part a disregard of man's nature and even violence to its laws. In any other matter such a misunderstanding would be grotesque. A lately wedded pair, friends of mine, were showing me the equipments of their new home, and among these a tastefully inlaid sideboard, made by the bride's own hands. Surprised at this mechanical skill in a young woman, I asked how she could do so elaborate a piece of man's work; and for answer they threw open a tool-closet. Was this an answer? I saw the shining array of tools; but could the fair wood-carver be satis-

fied to use any tool her hand might chance to light upon? Would she try to smooth boards with a saw, or halve them with a plane? I might be certain that so dainty a bit of cabinet-work was achieved only by using tools after their sort.

To use a tool against its make would be absurd ; to use a man against his nature would be wrong. It is at bottom the only wrong ; and the only right is to act according to nature. I mean, of course, the typical nature ; a nick in a plane's knife spoils it as a standard for planes. The highest life of the spirit comes under a rule as physiological, if we may so term it. All the mistaken theories have lost sight of something suitable to man as man, and experience could not but show a bad fruitage of those theories. Let us agree to be on our guard, from beginning to end of this inquiry, against non-natural rules for the Highest Life. Otherwise our inquiry cannot so much as make a fair start.

## SECTION II.—SINLESS PERFECTION

**A** CENTURY and a half ago the highest life was enthusiastically preached as a state of "deliverance from all sin." Freedom from outward offence and inward defilement was said to be quite within reach. Of course such a claim started a dispute; but for a full hundred years Sinless Perfection was what would be thought of if entire sanctification was urged. Within the last fifty years other ways of thinking, on the part of those who have this matter at heart, have drawn to themselves more general notice. The elder notion has by no means been given up, but it no longer fills the public eye; and now at length, outside of what seem narrowing circles, little show is made by the once zealously presented idea of Sinless Perfection. This is not because it has been refuted from Scripture, but because to most persons it has not seemed to be warranted by experience.

The doctrine has, indeed, been stoutly attacked and defended on scriptural grounds, but without a decisive victory for either side. As matter of fact there is no passage in the New Testament which declares sinlessness possible, and none which pronounces it impossible. Passages in plenty can be cited from which one or the other doctrine is inferred; but none is evidently meant to state either of these opposites. Explanation enough is that just this matter did not come up for consideration in New Testament times. The question for those times was whether he that used to steal could be kept from stealing any more; whether the seasoned liar would henceforth tell the truth; whether the foul mouth would become clean, the unchaste life be pure, the contentious and domineering learn to live in peace. Or, if the very teachings of Christianity seemed to invite mischief, then John might have something emphatic to say about those who let their bodies go on sinning while their enlightened spirits claim to be sinless; Paul would have to explain that God's free grace did not leave the believer free to disobey God; and James would be shocked that a

pretence to true faith was set up by any one whose faith was unfruitful. But at bottom these are the same answer to allied forms of the same problem. The problem was to show how holy living was implied, according to Paul, in divine remission of sins; according to John, in divine renewal of the heart; according to James, in faith which "works patience" and secures every gift from Him "who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." But the existence at that time of a problem which must now seem so anomalous, means that a venomous error about "freedom from law" had already begun to lift its head. It was a strangely persistent error, fastening upon the gospel like a parasite in its natural home. Somewhat later than the traditional date of these New Testament writings, in union with other fantastic speculations, it was known as gnosticism. But the early rise of this error does not in the least imply that true-hearted Christians were busied with the present-day problem, what the highest life is, or whether it is possible to be entirely free from sin.

Neither party to the modern controversy

will be ready to admit that he has no Scripture on his side. The perfectionist will insist that Jesus said "Be perfect," and that Peter had it, "Be holy, for the Lord your God is holy." This is to state the ideal; but does it follow that the ideal in those days was the actual, or that in any day what a good man would like to be does not keep ahead of what he makes out to be? And so, when Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, one and all, that "being made free from sin they became servants of righteousness," is he out and out telling them that, without distinction, they had attained to sinlessness? If, then, the anti-perfectionist, on the other hand, is ready with Paul's disclaimer of being "already perfect," or if he lets fly John's fierce denial that there was any truth in the man who said he had no sin, why, then, we ought to bear in mind that neither Paul nor John said that men cannot be sinless, but only that they are not so. *Is not* is not the same as *cannot be*; the impossible is decidedly to be distinguished from the impracticable. This must be insisted on with those who are bent on settling the theoretical issue whether sinlessness is possible on earth. What Paul



and John would say to such a possibility we can only guess. We know that they said nothing about it which has survived, and gave no hint that the matter was even considered in their day.

But while the Scriptures have been silent, experience has been vocal; and the testimony of experience has not convinced the great mass of Protestants that sinless perfection is attained by those who lay claim to it. Not to make too fine a point, if there are any claimants whose claim stands undisputed, these are few, are far removed from the personal acquaintance of most of us, and for this reason at any rate are unable to create and keep alive a general belief in their perfections. Perfectionism, therefore, is not any longer so much disputed as disregarded; and the disregard is in large part due to a diversion of interest toward other doctrines which promise the benefits, while claiming to be exempt from the objections, connected with the earlier view. The very name of Sinless Perfection has been for the most part dropped in favor of the name Christian Perfection. This latter does

not renounce the claim to sinlessness, but does not push it to the front. Perfect love and perfect faith are held, as they were a century ago, to constitute "evangelical obedience," not to the exclusion of infirmities, but to the exclusion of sins, not to prevention of fault, but to exemption from blame. Now when "evangelical obedience" is emphasized as equivalent to deliverance from sin, the renunciation of the word "sinless" does not make the doctrine materially different from the earlier doctrine; but when doubt is felt about such an equivalence, the doctrine merges into a later opinion about holiness and "The Higher Life." Opinions of this class will presently be noticed.

#### THE OBERLIN DOCTRINE

We cannot afford to pass unnoticed a phase of doctrine now almost forgotten, which once created a great stir and had the most singular history of all. The facts concerning the Oberlin perfectionism are obtained for the most part from the late President Fairchild's pamphlet history of this episode. Quotations, unless

otherwise credited, are from his pen. It fell to Rev. Asa Mahan, the first President of Oberlin College, an institution especially famed in its early days for antislavery zeal, to formulate and publish the views taught there concerning sinless perfection, as distinguished from absolute holiness or the immeasurable devotion of angels. But the professor of theology, the subsequent president, Rev. Charles G. Finney, had been an evangelist of extraordinary power over educated men, and soon became the real exponent of Oberlin theology. His views, to begin with, parted company with Wesley's at a point quite startling on the part of a Calvinist. Wesley taught that men's ability to accept Christ was due to the gracious impartation of the Holy Spirit to all men; but Dr. Finney insisted, as though he were a thorough-paced Pelagian, and far as possible from Calvinism, that all men are by nature able to obey God's law; indeed, that sheer justice would require God to let down his law to such ability as men have. This element in Dr. Finney's doctrine was thrown into unintended prominence by an occurrence without parallel, so far as I know, in the history of theological schools. Two

young men who had graduated at the college two years earlier, Thomas and William Cochran, came back in 1841 with a new doctrine. William read and published a paper on "Simplicity of Moral Action." It won over practically the entire faculty, with the possible exception of Professor Cowles, and "from that day it became a feature of the Oberlin theology." For once a modern theologian might take up the boast of a fellow-student in far away times, and chant what no doubt a plenty of students have thought, "I have more understanding than all my teachers."

The doctrine of Simplicity of Moral Action maintained "the impossibility of a divided heart in moral action." That is, when the will decides, it has decided for either unmixed right or unmixed wrong. At that instant a man is wholly a sinner or wholly a saint. "The sinner, in his sin, is utterly destitute of righteousness, and the good man, in his obedience, is completely, entirely obedient." Right and wrong attach only to acts of will, it was held, including voluntary states. Conclusions follow which the rigorous logic of Dr. Finney did not refuse, but which were sufficiently startling to

his brethren. The new birth, which is usually ascribed to the Holy Spirit, must, he said, be the same as conversion, or the heart's own turning to God. Dr. Finney afterward said, "Instead of telling sinners to pray for a new heart, I called on them to make themselves a new heart." Since a man is altogether one thing or the other, he remains a Christian only so long as he remains without sin. When he sins, he lapses into the state into which he was born of the flesh; and when he repents, he enters once more the state into which he was born of the Spirit. And so the ordinary disciple is making and unmaking his regeneration as rapidly as he sins and repents. But another consequence was that complete sanctification was involved in regeneration. So long as a man is regenerate, so long is he perfectly sinless.

It should surprise no one that a constant oscillation between states described as entire enmity to God and entire loyalty to him must either be extremely agitating, or else escape emotional extravagance only by belittling the alleged transformations through becoming inured to them. Both results followed. In this case as in other cases experience proved a plain-

speaking teacher, and her teachings got themselves accepted, as in the end they always do. At Oberlin "there came to be less confidence in the style of Christian culture involving a special experience. . . . It became more and more a matter of doubt whether the seeking of sanctification as a special experience was on the whole to be encouraged, and it was not in general an occasion of satisfaction when a young man gave himself to seeking 'the blessing;' and when he obtained the thing he sought, there came to be less confidence that he had made substantial progress. It was not found that such experiences were always associated with the most stable and symmetrical character. Indeed, if I have rightly observed, it came at length to be the fact, more than at first, that persons of less balanced character were more likely to share in the special experience. It soon appeared too that persons who had not partaken of the peculiar experience, in its intense forms, were just as earnest and effective Christian workers in the different departments of Christian labor as those who were supposed to be especially favored." To this Dr. Fairchild adds that physical health often

suffered from "too great intensity of emotion. . . . In some cases a lifelong detriment was the result." Then came the second result; the change itself was virtually belittled. "The feeling at length began to prevail that the idea of a special sanctification induced a religious culture that was too subjective and introspective, and that it was more wholesome to take the believer out of himself and away from this direct emotional self-culture to the great objects of his faith, the grand facts and truths of the gospel out of which salvation springs. Thus the interest in the movement as to these special forms of experience gradually subsided." And now Dr. G. N. Boardman can state in his "History of New England Theology," "both advocacy of, and opposition to, the system died away many years ago. Whether it is still maintained by any one is hardly a matter of inquiry." The Oberlin Perfectionism passed out of mind not because theoretically refuted, but because practically invalidated. After experience has announced her verdict against a notion, people care very little whether it is confuted in theory or not.



### SECTION III.—THE HIGHER LIFE

PERFECTIONISM is a dogma of Roman Catholics and Wesleyans. One of its zealous advocates calls it “the great distinguishing doctrine of Methodism.” It has been held under peculiar forms or for peculiar reasons by some minor sects and parties in sects; otherwise it has prevailed only with advocates of freedom in the human will, as distinguished from divine election. But about forty years ago a doctrine of “The Higher Life” began to take form and spread somewhat among Calvinists. It differed at first from perfectionism hardly otherwise than by renouncing the claim to freedom from all sin, and setting up a claim to freedom from all *known* sin. By and by even this claim was softened by leading representatives into that of “entire consecration;” and in the end the doctrine of the Higher Life figured as little more than a strongly emphasized doctrine of “Christian assurance;” that is, of confidence



and complacency as to one's relations to the Most High.

It was held that, to begin with, all obstacles to God's especial favor must be removed by a special act of submission; that a special act of faith must follow; that this would be responded to by a special gift of the Holy Spirit, which in turn would lift the believer into a special state as distinct from his earlier regenerate state as this had been from his state before regeneration. In brief, the Higher Life was held to be a special state reached by a special process. In this new state all responsibility for keeping the soul from sin was rolled upon Christ, while the advanced Christian, sure of his acceptance and sure of himself, rested in a measureless peace, and was filled with a supernatural joy which he could no longer fear would be "followed by depression and darkness." This state was sometimes called "the rest of faith," "full assurance," or, in common with more or less differing views, "the second blessing," "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," and by like graphic names.

Graver minds have always thought lightly of the Higher Life. Not even enthusiasm was

widely enlisted in its favor. The evidence for it shows noteworthy peculiarities. As most Bible students see the case, the Book contains no evidence for an additional transformation of the believer which is like an additional new birth; that is, puts him in a class apart from other Christians. But experience certainly appeared to supply the proof which the Bible withheld. There are saintly persons who do not claim to be free from all sin, yet who may be easily regarded as free from all open and known sin. The number is not insignificant of those who in deepest purpose are consecrated to the will of God, as there is no evidence and no claim that their brethren in the church are consecrated. We hear also expressions of remarkable trust in Christ and delight in his love which are too evidently sincere and too intelligent to be doubted. When these favored persons assure us that the privileges they enjoy were granted in answer to special prayer, and came like a sudden light from heaven, that since then they can hardly feel themselves to be the same beings, and surely are not pining on the same barrens, nor shivering under the forbidding views of

God amidst which their earlier Christian life was passed, it is then easy to understand how they have come to believe that their inner life was uplifted by sheer force of a "second blessing" into a sphere which no man can enter except by the same means. It may easily seem to them ungrateful and even graceless to account for their state as the mere outgrowth of a disciple's common privileges, the sheer unfolding in full of a spiritual endowment which had been received at the new birth. And so, as matter of fact, the doctrine of the higher life is an interpretation of experience rather than of the Bible. This I take to be a perfectly fair, as it surely is a not unsympathetic statement of the case.

But that doctrine is now almost forgotten in the regions where it once was rife. It had a history only about one-third as long as that of Protestant perfectionism. The briefness of its history illustrates the singular but indubitable fact that in religion the higher the claims, the stronger the confidence. This unmistakably different place in public regard is also to be accounted for in part by the fact

that the perfectionist doctrine was formally indorsed by the most powerful Protestant body in Christendom, while the Higher Life scheme sprang up among its natural foes; but the briefness of its history is chiefly to be explained, as I think, by the fact that the real support of the Higher Life view was in experience alone; and experience, as most Christians understood the matter, soon refused its support. This support seemed to be wanting at almost every point. The very attempt at moderation — namely, the claim to be exempt from known sin only — drew a sharp line between its professors and the familiar heroes of the faith; because the popular saints, so far from regarding themselves as free from inwrought sin, are often peculiarly alive to the treachery of their own hearts. Paul is here the type of Protestant Christianity. He seems, indeed, quite a modern campaigner. For him there is no “rest of faith.” He has peace with God, and “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set him free from the law of sin and death;” yet he does not even know what to pray for as he ought, and the Spirit in him groans its unutterable prayers for him.

He runs, he wrestles, he buffets his body. His attainments, what are they to him? He turns his back on them and then forgets them. He reaches forth to things still before; he presses toward the mark. Though God himself is working in him to will and to do, this to Paul is reason for working out his own salvation, and for fear and trembling lest he thwart such a co-worker. It is only when the time of his departure is at hand, when his fight has been fought, his course finished, his faith kept, that Paul's spirit seems at rest and "leaves the whole responsibility with Jesus;" persuaded that what is thus committed will be "kept against that day." Paul was strenuous, not reposeful; and to the modern spirit any essentially different type of inner life seems wanting in thoroughness or even in reality. Not that we are without rest, nor yet that our rest is a truce from battle; but that, while the battle rages, we rest in steadfast assurance of coming off conquerors through him who loved us.

The peace and joy of the higher life which, it was said, were never to be shaken, have seemed to many lookers-on especially insecure.

Wesley is said to have lamented as to the earlier type of perfectionism that "not one in thirty retained the blessing." But, worse still, the hardly concealed, often openly avowed motive to the Higher Life was escape from the annoyance of struggle with temptation. Comfortableness was always likely to be the real inducement; and to commonplace Christians it has seemed out of keeping with our religion's high aims to teach that any state of the sensibilities, any delight, however intense, any peace of mind, however placid, was worthy to be regarded as the utmost and the best which the Spirit of God can do for spirituality. In fact, some who were deeply impressed by the pretensions of the Higher Life, quite taken captive by its offers, and who acknowledge that they owe to it a sense of God's nearness which the lapse of a score of years has but confirmed, early learned to look upon the story of its ecstatic delights as but an invitation to self-seeking, a kind of spiritual luxuriousness which exposed its devotees to strong and gross temptations.

But, most important of all, experience, in the common opinion, has seemed to settle it that

the Higher Life brotherhood was not veritably raised by an especial act of the Holy Spirit into a state shared by no other believers. They thought they were a class apart, because they thought they were now so different from what they themselves had been. This conclusion was natural, but it could not help discrediting them with other Christians. They could not show evidence for it satisfactory to many besides themselves. The New Testament does not, to say the least, unequivocally declare for it, I think does not even hint at it; and what was there which looked as though they were as different in sort from their brethren as robins are from blackbirds, or oxen from camels?

Graver perils were feared from this feature of their doctrine than from any other. Special prerogatives were claimed for the special state. These prerogatives were both Godward and manward. Godward the pre-eminent prerogative was prevalence in prayer. But we are not taught that only exalted piety can make sure of an answer. To appeal in the name of Jesus is enough. To be no better than Elijah, "a man of like passions with ourselves," is



enough. Peter went so far as to say that for husbands to give honor to their wives was one way to avoid having our "prayers hindered." It is a fair question whether, if God does not give good gifts because he likes to, the exalted goodness of any man can compel God. Really, this eminent prerogative of getting prayers answered exalts the goodness of a man above that of his Maker, or even turns prayer into a magician's incantation.

Other Christians might be scandalized at such a claim; they were certain to feel annoyed, if not amused, at the claim of a curious manward prerogative. The possessors of the Higher Life quietly assumed that the grace which made them eminent in holiness also made them pre-eminently wise. Why not? Is it not a little thing to expect that the special favor which kept them from sin should keep them also from blunders? Mortal man cannot think himself next door to perfection without looking to have his judgment accepted as next to infallible. But what with its claims of power with God and authority with man the Higher Life pretension threatened mischief among the simple-hearted. In Germany it



bade fair to renew among Baptists, as I was informed twenty years ago by one of their trustiest pastors, the fanaticisms and excesses practised by disorderly Anabaptists during the Reformation period. It was just this pretension to a spiritual elevation to be reached only by a special process which led the devout Spurgeon to protest that, while it was the privilege of every believer to enjoy peace of mind, the Higher Life claim was a pernicious mistake. Indeed, it was a familiar remark among pastors in the day when this propaganda was rife, that no one could attain the Higher Life and escape making mischief. So permanent became this impression that it is not unusual to hear leaders at Northfield like the Rev. Campbell Morgan declare that they know nothing of a "second blessing," or a third, or a thirtieth, but only that the Holy Spirit leads the soul through great crises to great attainments. And the sagacious Moody, who could use zealous workers without committing himself to their theories, would remark that the nearer men are to being sinless, the less they talk about it.

Now these inferences from experience

against the Higher Life may seem unfair; but the point is that they were generally drawn, and have so narrowed the vogue of this doctrine that, where it was once familiar, few advocates of it are left. Yet the doctrine was not fruitless of good. As the elder perfectionists emphasized the supreme obligation to avoid sin, so the Higher Life adherents proclaimed the privilege of serene and unwavering peace. The proclamation may have provoked dissent by its method,—that is, by putting on God once for all the responsibility for one's own future fidelity; but not even what seemed to most minds a fatuous and un-Pauline attempt to secure a quiet mind by a *tour de force* of faith could estop some who had tried it from henceforth confiding in their Master as their Keeper. And so, as the bequest of perfectionism is obedience vitalized by emotion, that of the Higher Life is spiritual serenity upheld by faith.

#### SECTION IV. — THE SHIFTED SELFHOOD

THE importance of Plymouth Brethren among English and American Protestants is paralleled only by the place which Unitarians hold. Unitarianism is often said by its adherents to be “a way of thinking.” The phrase is felicitously descriptive. As organized in parishes, Unitarianism is weak; as a dogma indicated by its name, it is still an enemy amidst its enemies; but as a spirit and a method of dealing with religion, Unitarianism is wide-spread and powerful. Quite at the opposite pole in ideas, method, and spirit, so removed also in the class of minds affected that either denomination might almost be unaware of the other’s existence, Plymouth Brethrenism is like Unitarianism in its meagreness as an organization and in its potency as an influence. This influence is achieved in both cases through the agency of the press. Unitarianism is largely dominant in literature, Brethrenism in popular commentaries on the Bible. And so, while the one

finds persuasive voice in polite letters and sage newspapers, the other quietly orders the message of many an "evangelist."

Singularly enough, if the evangelists let the bent which they receive from Plymouth Brethren prevail, it would set them in utter antagonism to ideas concerning the spiritual life equally dear, which they owe to perfectionists. Now and then this incompatibility asserts itself in unsparing condemnation of one side by the other. To a consistent Plymouth Brother, the typical perfectionism is a sentimental delusion; to a typical perfectionist, Brethrenism is baldly juridical and repellently cold. To the one the Christian life at its best is a logically balanced, logically imputed, and logically proved transaction of Christ in behalf of the elect; to the other it is a felt indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a self-surrendered heart. All the old issues between Calvinists and anti-Calvinists are involved, as well as the instinctively opposed types of intellectual and emotional piety. As to matters with which these pages are busied, the Plymouth Brother's hand is characteristically against every man, and every man's hand against him.

Plymouth Brethren owe their name to the country folk in the neighborhood of Plymouth, England, from which place the Brethren were accustomed to make preaching excursions; but the movement had started about the year 1827 in Ireland as the fruit of study concerning the Second Advent. It was conceived that, since the church is properly spiritual, it had apostatized as long ago as apostolic times in accepting official ministers as virtually mediators between God and man. In teaching that the Holy Spirit is the sufficient guide of every believer, and alone has a right to preside when believers meet, the Plymouth Brethren naturally disturbed existing organizations, and the disturbing influence radiated from their doctrines about the Holy Spirit.

Their attitude as to the highest life was fixed by that taken as to the new birth. The Plymouth Brother holds that every child of God has two distinct natures, the old and the new. The new nature is produced by regeneration not out of, but in addition to, the old. Statements like these are nowhere unfamiliar in the freedom of colloquial speech; but the specialties of the Brethren's doctrine are two:

first, the new nature is not merely a new disposition, but is a new entity, and the real self, the old nature, is another entity which was once the self and still exists, but is the self no longer. Secondly, the new nature is sinless and insusceptible of betterment, except in the way of growth by "feeding on the Word;" whereas the old nature is irredeemably bad, and must be destroyed at death, or at the Lord's second coming. Whatever the bad old self does, the new self, which is the real self, does no wrong.

A not inconsiderable array of Scriptures is claimed for this startling view; for instance, John's saying that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; . . . and he cannot sin, because he is born of God;" or Paul's words, "I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me." John, to be sure, also plumply notifies the man who says no sin is in him, that no truth is in him; and Paul certifies us that he never relaxes his own struggle against sin. In whatever manner these paradoxes are to be resolved, two points of present moment are clear: John and Paul were highly imaginative and even hyperbolic writers, while the Plymouth Brethren

are singularly unimaginative, therefore unsympathetic and unsafe interpreters of imaginative writings;<sup>1</sup> secondly, experience has rendered her calm, relentless verdict against the Plymouth notion of the highest life.

The very theory of the Brethren was so startling that its success in practice could be looked for only by themselves. If by the existence in us of two natures they had meant no more than others mean when resorting to these picturesque terms, — namely, that every faithful disciple finds loyalty to God confronted in him by ineradicable proclivities to evil, — the distinction would have been as sober-minded as it is momentous; but when they insist that selfhood is shifted from the “old man” to the “new man,” that the one persists in unqualified badness, while the other abides in irreproachable goodness, they defy the very beginnings of knowledge about men. People in general do not find it possible to hold that the familiar self can be stripped of its personality, and yet remain active in the same body alongside a

<sup>1</sup> Lack of imagination in interpreting imaginative writings is often coupled with a fancifulness which detects in the Old Testament types and predictions of events and ideas characteristic solely of the New.



newly created self to which personality has been transferred. There is too much commonplace psychology in the air to allow easy credence of a theory so hostile to what all plain folk know about themselves. What do familiar terms mean when so used? What does "self" mean to the average man if it no longer means "the same"? Continuous identity of personality is the fundamental marvel and the fundamental reality in a human being. Now the Brethren did not set up for expounders of a new psychology, but they had the misfortune to be defying all the psychology there was afloat. Not only mental science, but the plain sense of all men, guarded most of their hearers and many readers against making the New Testament responsible for the fancy of a shifted selfhood. With the same emphasis all consciences cry out at the moral obliquity of claiming to do no wrong, while that which once was self goes on in wrong-doing. And this claim has been made. There are some who confess *sins*, but deny *sin*. "Ephraim said . . . They shall find none iniquity in me that were sin." A well-known clergyman<sup>1</sup> has

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. A. C. Dixon.



published the statement that a professional evangelist who had been found drunk declared to him "he became intoxicated when under the influence of the Holy Spirit"! And it is on record<sup>1</sup> that a Scotch Plymouth Brother, who had been rebuking tippling at a tavern, presently sat down to his cups saying that what was wicked in others was blameless in him, because he had "been converted."

This is precisely the error rebuked by John: "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Or, if the Brethren ask us to take Paul at his word when he says, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," we should take him so when he says, "I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me." In the first case, he would be denying that the old self was any longer Paul; but in the second case, he would be denying that even the new self was Paul. Can the most determined idealist be persuaded that either regeneration or sanctification has stripped him too of personality, and left him with no soul of his own? If we are to take both sayings literally, any one can see that we shall have no Paul at

<sup>1</sup> Reid's *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled*, p. 160.

all, but only Paul's body holding a reincarnated Christ. When those who love the Book take such risks in interpreting it, they do so only for the sake of a purely fanciful theory which they love too well, and which, it sometimes happens, they teach incautious persons to love. But the ill success of Brethrenism with the mass of people is sufficiently accounted for when we see that experience utterly sets at naught both the doctrine and the overstrained literalness which is relied on for the doctrine's defence. Too many of us plodders of the western world habitually fall into hyperbole to leave us any excuse if we let this bold figure of speech go unrecognized and unenjoyed in Eastern and ancient apostles.

It is want of discrimination in dealing with New Testament figures of speech which is responsible for most of the petty, eccentric, and almost vexatious sects. Yet the hearts of ordinary Christians are touched by the deference of Plymouth Brethren, at all costs, to the Bible as they understand it. It is a characteristic especially affecting to those who grieve that their own faith is shaken. And experience justifies this fellow-feeling toward some whom

one does not himself agree with. The wrench with which faith departs is an experiential vindication of faith. Experience can detect that something is wrong, when it cannot discover what would be right. The truth on not a few points must be got from the Bible, or not at all. It is not here and now the question why a book which, after all, but sets forth truths of ancient experience should prove the best interpreter of present-day experience. That it is so is hardly denied. It is, then, no ground of reproach against Plymouth Brethren, but a lesson if possible worth learning from them, that they believe in and defer to the Bible. But we and they ought to adopt methods of interpretation wiser than those which they have followed.

## SECTION V. — THE KESWICK MOVEMENT

**A**N American layman bridged in his own person the wide chasm between the position of Plymouth Brethren on the one side, across the lofty abutments of Sinless Perfection and the Rest of Faith, to the Keswick teaching on the opposite shore. Robert Pearsall Smith became the subject at a "Holiness Meeting," of experiences which often profoundly change the sentiments and habits of a lifetime. As a Plymouth Brother he might have been content with the holiness which comes with conversion ; but as one who sought "the blessing" at a holiness meeting, he virtually gave up a logical for an emotional assurance, a faith supposed to be founded on the Bible for a faith distinctly based on an interpretation of experience. Yet this change, from the bold yet frigid doctrine of the Brethren to that which was taught at the holiness meeting, was hardly more significant than that which is almost insensibly coming about between the

self-seeking of the perfectionist and Higher Life schemes and the self-forgetful aims of the Keswick movement, at least as it is now taking form in America. So striking and so vital is this difference that, when one of the earlier disciples of the Higher Life heard the Keswick position defined, he exclaimed, "Why, this is just the opposite!" And so in effect, we may hope, it is at least beginning to be.

Although still following business pursuits, Mr. Pearsall Smith became after the holiness meeting active and notably successful in religious leadership. In 1872 his activities were extended to Europe, and were accepted with enthusiasm by evangelical circles in England. Yet already in his own land an erratic and questionable tendency had appeared in his methods. The consequences dreaded in Germany have already been mentioned. In England his teachings fell under the strictures of Mr. Spurgeon, and his proceedings, as is widely known, drew upon him the censure of his associates. As a result he became dispirited, withdrew from the work, and sank into scepticism. It is pleasant to record that before his death he had escaped from Doubting Castle.

But his defection did not occur until he had begun in Oxford and Brighton a movement which, under more cautious leadership, has been associated for over twenty years with the seat of yearly conferences, the village of Keswick in the pleasant Lake Country of England.

Contrast of aims between earlier schemes and the Keswick scheme did not by any means exist at the outset, and is not always recognizable even now. The earliest Keswick conferences under the presidency of Canon Battersby differed from the Oxford and Brighton meetings under the leadership of Pearsall Smith simply in being more wisely managed. They aimed alike at "deepening the spiritual life." This is still pre-eminently their aim at Keswick; but the hope and the purpose of fitting for higher service those who attend the conferences has gradually taken a prominence, at least now and then, which brings the movement into fuller harmony with the practical genius of Christianity in our generation. One of the closest observers traces this result largely to the late Dwight L. Moody. Every summer Mr. Moody brought some of the Keswick leaders over to Northfield, and it is

easy to believe that they there fell more or less under the influence of his masterful spirit. Keswick lent its inspiration to Northfield, and Northfield was deferred to at Keswick. The keen observer above mentioned recalls many scenes at Northfield when, to quote his very explicit statement, what was intended "to lead and end in 'life' and its deepening, Mr. Moody, with his eye for the practical and for swift results, used to turn into 'power' and its effect in rousing the churches and saving souls. The Keswick brethren were occasionally perplexed at his summary disposal of their efforts. He wanted ministers to 'get the blessing,' go home and 'set the churches afire' and save sinners."

Now if this account of perhaps unconscious developments in the Keswick movement is correct, it is greatly to the credit of those who have the movement under their charge. At all events, one of its American representatives writes me as to the existing spirit and aims: "By all means we hold that the Holy Spirit's threefold work is 1, Regeneration; 2, Sanctification, especially of disposition; 3, Service, which is very much emphasized as the grand



outcome of holy living." It is this third feature of the movement which gives it unique importance among sanctificationist schemes, and makes it the embodiment of higher promise than earlier schemes were able to hold out.

Certainly the Keswick aim has never been to stir the sensibilities. It is carefully guarded at that point. Earlier proceedings in Oxford and Brighton gave the English evangelicals a wholesome dread of excessive emotionalism. The Keswick platform as ordinarily presented does not, like the Higher Life doctrine, teach that the Holy Spirit is given to make men happy, but is sent to make them holy and helpful. Still, it must not be overlooked that individuals do not seem quite settled in their minds on this point. For example, the Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson, whom I take to be the foremost American leader of the Keswick movement, in his *Story of Keswick* [p. 78] states that after steps one to five, including infilling of the Spirit, "beyond these there is always a sixth and last stage of teaching,—the privileges and victories implied in this higher and deeper life, such as the rest of faith," etc. But in a more recent appeal by



thirty-three gentlemen, of whom Dr. Pierson is first, the sixth attainment is very different from mere rest, it is "separation . . . for service," and the seventh is, as in most Keswick programmes, the "infilling."

Another proposition, hardly peculiar to Keswick, is that the success of its preachers is accounted for, not by their eloquence, for they seem to avoid being eloquent; not by their learning, which they never parade; not even by their knack of managing men, a gift which they must be admitted to possess in high degree; but all their success is scrupulously, insistently, and incessantly ascribed to "the fulness of the Holy Spirit" in them. It is noteworthy that this is done not merely as an act of pious acknowledgment, but as a calm and accurate way of accounting for the impressiveness shown by their leading preachers. And so they tell other ministers, to use the language of Rev. F. B. Meyer<sup>1</sup> concerning what he calls "the power of God the Holy Ghost stored in Christ," "As soon as you link to it, not you, but the power of God through you, will repeat the marvels of Pentecost."

<sup>1</sup> *A Castaway*, p. 89.

The Keswick movement is further distinguished in special degree by the measures which it prescribes for obtaining a grant of "power from on high." It specifies seven steps which the aspirants for this enduement must take, and commonly in the order mentioned.<sup>1</sup> These steps are:—

1. Immediate abandonment of every known sin and doubtful indulgence.

2. Surrender of the whole being to Jesus Christ as not only Saviour, but Master and Lord.

3. Appropriation by faith of God's promise and power for holy living.

4. Voluntary mortification of the self-life, that God may be all in all.

5. Gracious renewal or transformation of the inmost temper and disposition.

6. Separation unto God for sanctification and service.

7. Enduement with power and filling with the Holy Spirit.

But experience must be consulted as to the worth of the Keswick movement, and experience already has something adverse to show. The

<sup>1</sup> The Keswick platform as stated in the circular appeal of Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson and thirty-two others, "To all who love our Lord, Jesus Christ," etc.

feature last mentioned had been tested and condemned before it was taken up at Keswick.

The plan of attaining a high state of grace through a series of prescribed steps, although novel to most Protestants, is familiar to Romanists. For hundreds of years the monastic establishments of the Roman Church prescribed in their rules of life methods, more or less elaborate, by which "the religious" are led on toward perfection. The Jesuit system reduced its method to military precision and rigor. Almost at once the novice must let his will be broken by an exacting series of practices directed to this end; while the "coadjutors" and the "professed" learn in the process of years to yield even reason and natural affection to the demands of their superior. The Mystics and Quietists in turn rediscovered or reinvented the processes fittest in their opinion for leading the devotee into what Madame Guyon's famous "Way to God" called "an amorous passivity," an "expiring in the arms of love," a "dying in the embraces of the Lord," and a resultant union with him which she can compare only to "a bride fainting in the arms of her husband, . . . and re-

called to life by his tender caresses.”<sup>1</sup> This is as significantly French and Romanist as the story of a Keswick leader’s transformation is English and at least not offensively un-Protestant. “I turned to Christ and said: ‘Lord, as I breathe in this whiff of warm night air, so I breathe into every part of me Thy blessed Spirit.’ I felt no hand laid on my head, there was no lambent flame, there was no rushing sound from heaven; but by faith, without emotion, without excitement, I took, and took for the first time, and have kept on taking ever since.”<sup>2</sup> But the experience prescribed by the Catholic Quietist is nearer that prescribed by the Keswick group than is the experience of their own leader. Madame Guyon declared that it was necessary to take time for the consummation of the process, and meanwhile to suffer from “aridities” as well as to taste delights; but Mr. Meyer consented to no delay, overleaped all possible gradations, and took to himself in a moment and in full the enduement of the Spirit. The English meetings have sometimes required for this result a week or

<sup>1</sup> Madame Guyon’s *Way to God*, chapters iii. v. vi.

<sup>2</sup> F. B. Meyer’s *A Castaway*, p. 96.

more, with a day given to each step. It is clear enough that the New Testament does not map out a scheme of graded advance by special steps from a regenerate but unsanctified state to a state in which the believer is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul, to be sure, describes the various armor of God, and Peter notes graces which should be added to graces; but in neither case is there any reason to understand that a strict order of promotion is laid down. And so far as experience is entitled to a voice, on no point could its warning be more explicit. For centuries the plan of a prescribed process has been as thoroughly tried as a plan could be tried, and has as thoroughly failed as a plan could fail. Monasticism is antiquated and moribund, especially as a method of "deepening the spiritual life." Protestants in general agree that not devotion to Christ in retirement, but devotion to the cause of Christ in the world is the ideal and the urgent need for Christians. No doubt individuals have found one or another set of steps useful. This is why the steps have been wrought into a scheme and prescribed by these very individuals when act-

ing as spiritual directors for aspiring souls. It is a mistake against which the sagacious Moody warned his co-workers. The one way, he said, not to help another man is to tell him your religious experience. This is because no circumstantial process of entering or advancing in the Christian life is prescribed either in the New Testament or by the nature of the case. Your experience is your own and not another's, because you are not another. Marked diversity exists and is desirable. Only Jesuitism would wholly suppress it. "If they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body." And so, if the question is whether the largest spiritual good is to be reached by a prescribed process, by a strategic series of devotional approaches, the answer of history in the Roman Church, as well as the ingrained conviction of the Protestant centuries, is unequivocally No. In fact, the Keswick leaders themselves seem not yet quite certain what process to prescribe. As already intimated, if one will look over recent prescriptions, he will find them strikingly different. Evidently the best wisdom and inventiveness which

could be brought to bear have not yet settled what is the indispensable supplement to the Bible's requirements.

Now as to the supreme gift of the Holy Spirit there is another point which experience has not been testing hitherto on so large a scale or for so long a period; but it is a point which more sensibly than anything else in the Keswick plans touches Christian ministers, and they are the class of persons to whom, above all others, plans of this kind must make their chief appeal. This critical point is that the Holy Spirit is given for "power." The prospect is thrilling. The question which for pastors takes precedence of all other questions is, Are there any terms on which ordinary ministers can secure the power over a congregation which is shown by the Keswick leaders? To use the words of Mr. Meyer, can I so "link to the power of the Holy Ghost stored in God that not I, but the power of God through me, will repeat the marvels of Pentecost"? Think what such an offer is to the average pastor; what it is to the preacher whose congregation but half fills the meeting-house, and maybe is becoming smaller; what



it is even to the popular pulpiteer, envied by other preachers and coveted by other preachers' churches, who has crowds to hear him, but whose heart is desolate because he sees no good coming of it all, and who is himself genuine enough to look upon his show of success as a mockery. When the apostle from Keswick arrives, what wonder that ministers throng any church in which he is to speak? He is going to speak about piety; but they know it will be about piety as a means to power. And when he shows his saintly, winsome English face, and with calm, slow words, in tones as hushed as the duty to be heard will allow, in the very first breath assures his brothers in the service of the gospel that they must ascribe nothing to any ability of his, but all to the power of the Holy Ghost; and when those who listen and look absolutely believe in his childlike ingenuousness and in him, as I am sure they all do, how can he fail to hold every mind intent and every heart wide open for the secret which he is getting ready to tell? For his secret is how each and all those ordinary persons can "repeat the marvels of Pentecost." It would satisfy most of them if they could re-



peat the marvel which he is now doing before them so smoothly and so easily. This is certainly something that we must look into.

And, mark you, he is not offering the fulness of the Spirit in order to — “1, abandonment of sin; 2, surrender to Christ; 3, appropriation of God’s power for holy living; 4, mortification of the self-life; 5, transformation of the inmost temper; 6, separation unto God.” No, all of these momentous steps are to be taken *before the infilling* of the Spirit for power comes, and taken by our own energetic volition. For the making of character, we are taught, the Spirit is instilled “drop after drop;” but we must pass through many a flooding Pentecost if we are often to be “filled with the Spirit for power.”

And mark ye again, what we are looking into is not what is sometimes called “a special outpouring” upon a church, but it is an infilling of the preacher alone. All is made to turn on him, quite in the present-day fashion among churches; and sedate persons, I thought, were generally disposed to regard this as a doubtful fashion. At all events, that rapid awakening and wide absorption in religious

concerns known as a "revival" sometimes comes without the aid of a "revivalist," and comes as a surprise to a pastor. I know of one such in a village where a theological professor was "supplying" a pastorless church. It was a great, an astonishing revival, — and I wish I knew some other word for it beside this hackneyed and almost cant word. More than one hundred and thirty persons were added to that village church, and mostly held out afterwards. The professor was far from a revivalist. He was at that time new to his chair, and absorbed in making a system of theology, which, as evangelists agree, is almost surely fatal to vital godliness and to any real service which he might otherwise render to these sinful times. I knew him well enough to know that he had no great graces. He did not preach on week days, nor, ordinarily, did any one. He did not even go to the daily meetings, except once a week to hear "the experience of converts" whom he would the next Sunday have to receive. In short, it was not in any sense his revival. And the veteran who had been minister of that parish for eighteen years had been still more theological

than the professor. Not John Howe nor Nathaniel Emmons could outdo that stout Calvinist in the steadily theological cast of his discourses. Each was a whole "body of divinity" in due form and order. And this will make it plain to every one that, as it was not a professor's revival, it could not have been the old preacher's revival. But it seemed that "the people had a mind to work." It all started with a meeting of the young folks, for which leave was got. And so a revival may come like an unlooked for shower, when the pastor or his substitute is no better than perhaps the average of his brethren. It has been heard of that hollow-hearted men, even a "Rev. Theron Ware," may serve the purpose. "What then? Whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached."

The Keswick problem is not, therefore, whether ordinary spiritual endowment suffices to sanctify; nor whether great gains to a church may not be due to the people instead of to their pastor; nor is it the Keswick problem whether additional helps may not be granted for particular occasions; but it is about an entire "filling" by the Holy Spirit,

so that the pastor has a mysterious command over men. Some great orators owe to nature a gift like this. No one can tell what makes them so interesting, so persuasive. In default of a correct name for it, we choose a false one, and call it "magnetism." Now the problem raised for us by the Keswick claim is, does the Holy Spirit made unmagnetic preachers magnetic? Does it surcharge them, so to speak, with spiritual energy capable of exerting a spiritual pull on every near-by person? Does the gift of "power" override all distinctions and differences? Does it make of the dumb a Demosthenes? If we were arguing the case, it would be necessary to ask where in the New Testament anything like this is promised; but as we are merely reviewing the facts, we need only ask whether anything like this is actual. Do ordinary pastors see the wonders of Pentecost follow their ministry because they find themselves, like the apostles on that great day, filled for the occasion with the Holy Ghost? Experience says that some have tried it and succeeded, that others have tried it and failed. Experience says that this doctrine is not so

close to reality as the Pauline doctrine of "diversity of gifts." "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." Not all are apostles, prophets, nor teachers. Not all ministers can be masters of assemblies. Not all are or can be Beechers or Spurgeons, Brookses or Channings, Myers or Moodys or Morgans, nor even Elder Knapps. Not every pastor, as he meets people, can make himself pleasant, suave, easy, and welcome to every one's confidence. It may be that every familiarity the pastor attempts is alarming or resented. The sheep may flee their shepherd. God has certainly made us as different as he has made the body's members, giving to each one an office as it has pleased him. It did not follow in Paul's time, and it does not follow now, that the Holy Spirit has not as much part in the humblest and obscurest service as in the most conspicuous and most elevated.

"Who sweeps a room as for thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine."

Unless it can be shown that God means all ministers to prevail by pulpit power, it is a

cruel delusion for all ministers to look for pulpit power. A sickening disappointment and despondency may wait on him who spares no renunciation, no effort, no gift of himself to God, in hope that God in turn will specially grant him through the Holy Spirit ability to speak with effect when he goes on God's errands, and not leave him to be any longer the only interested listener to his own voice.

Experience, then, cannot be said uniformly to indorse the high expectations which the Keswick overture encourages. Experience still leaves it in question whether, in addition to all which the believer may count on from the abiding of the Comforter, there is a distinct gift for purity or for power. It is even a problem whether efficiency is not from time to time granted in answer to prayer, yet quite disproportionately to piety. If so, it refutes the Keswick teaching which requires entire self-dedication as a preliminary to spiritual power. And there is no prospect that this problem will be early settled to the satisfaction of believers in general.

Nevertheless, it is precisely in connection with their promises on this point that the Keswick leaders have of late been giving prominence to a view of the Holy Spirit's work, which forms an important advance on all earlier schemes for uplift of spirituality. This view is that the Spirit is given, not chiefly for the benefit of the one who receives it, but in order that he may be a helper of others. Of course, it must be admitted that not all the leaders are saying this with the emphasis that some of them use; that it may not be at all as much heard of over seas as in the Keswick circles of America; and that none of them all the time keep to the fore the truth that the most useful gift is the highest gift. But some of them are saying it at least part of the time; and it is a truth which, once clearly seen, cannot easily be again lost to sight, nor ever left unheard of. This view is not only, as we shall see, according to the New Testament's teaching, but is the first view which bids fair to bring all earnest minds into agreement on the theme of the highest life. Not that it quite adequately sets the matter forth; but that it presents one side of it, and that the



inside. As then the early perfectionists made prominent the moral aspect of sanctification, and the Higher Life scheme pressed on our notice its spiritual means and results, so the Keswick teaching offers its own peculiar advantage when, quite in harmony with the forward-looking gaze of those who are studying human kind and human interests, it strongly emphasizes the social aspects of the best Christian living. When, I say, and only when it does this, can the Keswick teaching show any high specialty to glory in.

Before passing to the more grateful duty of presenting the positive aspects of the highest life, I ought to state by way of summary what every attentive student of this theme must have noticed, that special theories of sanctification tend irresistibly toward perfectionism, however disguised. This tendency involves a fault in them all to which attention has not so far been called in these pages. It is literally a fault, a deficiency, a shortcoming, but hardly less deleterious than if it were an active vice. If individual perfectionists attain to the best type of living, they do so partly in spite of the



scheme which they have followed, however much helped by it. A defect as serious is exposed in the Keswick scheme both by the cautious reserve of its ideal and the incautious elaborateness of its sevenfold method. Indeed, this defect is singularly pervasive of the Keswick movement, and makes it possible that the graces which all admire in its best exemplars should sometimes be mated to peculiarities by which not a few are repelled.

But this error cannot be seen in full light except by contrast with the real nature of the highest life. We may hope that the real nature of that life will not be seriously disputed. All discussion and all trials have verged toward its recognition. All that the Christian generations have thought and urged, have longed for and enjoyed, tried and accomplished, helps us to see at last the same goal. But our final word about the Keswick movement and its shortcomings must be deferred to the closing section.



## II

### THE GOAL



## II

### THE GOAL

#### SECTION I. — IN OUTLINE

**I**F there were spiritual gifts for the Corinthians, it was for the sake of making those party-riven Christians helpful to each other. Paul leaves no doubt on that point. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." That this does not mean for one's own profiting, but for the profiting of all the rest, is made clear by all that Paul was then engaged in teaching. God's children, he said, were like members of the human body, each needing the other, God giving "more abundant honor to that part which lacked," and all "that there should be no schism in the body,"—the very thing there was at Corinth. This is what made the apostle interrupt his discussion of spiritual gifts to tell how much better than all gifts love is. Yet, the rhapsody of the thirteenth chapter being finished, Paul takes up the theme of spiritual

gifts again, and goes on to show that the gifts, primarily for the church, are also for the sake of those whom the church can reach, and are to be prized in proportion to the help they bring. And so, while tongues were worth something as signs to unbelievers, prophecy was worth more even to the same persons, for it led the unbeliever to worship God and to report abroad that God was of a truth among the Christians.

In these latter days and in our own land the good Keswick folk have set up the Pauline standard of spiritual gifts, and are content to recognize that the most useful gifts are the highest. They have not thus provided us with a complete statement of what constitutes the highest life, but they have furnished a clue. That the manifestation of the Spirit is given to make a man profitable is but an illustration of the general truth that the Highest Life which the Holy Spirit produces in us is:—

#### A LIFE FOR OBJECTS OUTSIDE OURSELVES.

That text about the gift of the Spirit for profitableness, and it is the most pertinent I know of, looks exclusively toward ends which the spiritual man may find in other men. It is a look

quite from the heart of the matter outward. As we recall the lessons which the several doctrines about the best living have bequeathed, we are led by them to different points of view, but always to a view from within outward, never from without inward. With one exception: the calm and studious Plymouth Brethren taught that we must take our doctrine from the Bible, not from what goes on within ourselves, and be content to have our place before God a thing imputed, or reckoned, to us. But the glowing advocates of Sinless Perfection, eager as they were for a radical change within, insisted that the highest life must be a life of obedience Godward. The beautiful dream of the Higher Life showed us Jesus as an object of unwavering trust. The unresting toilers from Keswick stir in us by example, even more movingly than by precept, the longing to spend and be spent in the service of men's souls. We are thus led by common accord to an outward look; and in that outward look we are instructed to notice moral, religious, and social elements in the Highest Life. These elements can be set forth in phrases convenient to ponder. The Highest

Life, formed in us by the Spirit of God, and directed to ends outside ourselves, is: —

TO DO RIGHT BECAUSE GOD REQUIRES IT;  
TO TRUST IN CHRIST BECAUSE HE DESERVES IT;  
TO LOVE THE BROTHER, WHOEVER HE IS.

The soundest considerations support this doctrine of the highest life. It does not need a deep mind to see that the true end of being for any living thing is to do what its structure provides for. Anatomy determines physiology, and physiology determines life. When the faculties of one class of beings are higher than those of another class, the way of living suitable to the lower class would be degradation and degeneracy for the higher class. It is not having but using the highest powers which gives worth to any life. Now man's highest powers are social. It is these which make possible the infinite intricacy of civilization, and all the noblest traits in human character. It is these which to the evolutionist connote man's supreme place in nature. The Christian religion but widens our relations, and supplies the strongest incentives to normal activity in these relations. Indeed, religion itself is but a social



relation with God. It is then the highest Christian life to live for objects outside oneself, only because it is the life worthiest of man; and it is the life worthiest of man, because only such a life carries with it the fullest employment of the distinctive and highest faculties of a human being. All the rights of religion, as well as of good morals and of bodily health, are provided for in just one way; namely, in acting according to the best that a man is. Sin is man's unmaking, and "the new man" is a man made over after the image of Him that created him. It seems a cold, unspiritual construing of the supreme duty to say that it is all summed up in the words, "Be manly;" but this is what Paul made of it in one strong Greek word,<sup>1</sup> as he rounded off his First Epistle to the Corinthians. The deepest thinking cannot dig below this, nor the highest aspirations mount above it. The highest life, the life like Christ's, the ideal life for a man, the life altogether bound up in its highest ends, in a word, the *normal* life, is —

#### TO LIVE FOR OBJECTS OUTSIDE ONESELF.

<sup>1</sup> Ἀνδριζεσθε (1 Cor. xvi. 13) familiarly translated by four words, "Quit yourselves like men."

## SECTION II. — THE MORAL ASPECT

**T**O DO RIGHT BECAUSE GOD REQUIRES IT, this is the highest Christian living from the point of view of morals.

If any one asks how to enter the Christian life, do not tell him to begin with doing right because God requires it. This would be to paganize Christianity. For paganism makes religion turn on what a man does Godward, while Christianity makes religion begin with what God does manward. To teach us, to renew us, to redeem us, these are the starting-point, and these all are for God to do. Luther, after the semi-paganized fashion of his times, tried to set himself right with God, did all that religion then required of him, went to confession without sins to confess, was like another Paul, "as touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." But he was aware that somehow all was amiss with him. And so it remained until he let God begin, and Christ be his justification. So must every

one who seeks to be in right relations with God. But from that instant the only measure of moral obligation which a man ought to allow himself is, as to all things great and small, to do right because God requires this.

I do not mean that it would cease to be duty to do right if there were no God. A rational being cannot help feeling that right is different from wrong. The difference belongs to the nature of the case. That right and wrong are essentially the same cannot even be imagined. If those clever young friends of mine could imaginably try with deft fingers to cut up the stuff for their side-board by planing across it, or to burnish its top with the flat of a saw, the absurdity of the attempt would be laughable. But that the absurd is really laughable cannot be proved; it can only be felt. That anything is droll can no more be proved than that anything is wrong; but who doubts either? The comic and the bad are both known intuitively. To rational beings they are self-evident realities, and knowledge of the self-evident is absolute. To deny the self-evident is self-stultification. That such realities exist is not disguised by

perplexity in particular cases. Even when I do not know whether this act is right, I know there is a right.

If, now, one tries to think away the inherent unlikeness of right and wrong for the sake of exalting God as lawgiver, if one says to himself, "The will of God alone makes right right, and wrong wrong," although he says it for religion's sake,—he is undermining religion. For if I cannot know whether right is in itself different from wrong, then I cannot know that God would be different if he were bad. If I cannot trust human reason to see self-evident truths by their own light, then I cannot know anything. Nor, I suppose, can God, since he presumably knows by intuition. And so we come to this fatal result: if it is not in itself duty to do right, it is not in itself duty to obey God, for that would only be to do what in itself is right. We may doubt whether there is a God, but not whether right is at bottom different from wrong. Still, this is not the end of the matter.

I now see that it is important to do right, but not yet how important it is. This importance can be gathered from three facts:

First, the true end for any being is to be and to do what it is naturally fit for. To a rational being the normal is the only right, the abnormal is the only wrong. A crime against nature is the uttermost evil, and conformity to nature is the uttermost good. So much is self-evident: to be normal is to be right, and admirably right; to be abnormal is to be wrong, and abominably wrong.

Secondly, it was God who gave us the constitution which we must not violate. To act according to our constitutive laws is to act according to the design of our Maker. There is thus a religious obligation to live normally. But not even yet is the full obligation to rightness in sight.

This obligation is seen only when, thirdly, the likeness of man to his Maker is seen. If God made man in his own image, for man to act according to his typical nature is to act according to God's nature, and to violate his typical nature is to do violence to the nature of God also. The ultimate standard of righteousness is nowhere short of the nature of God himself. Above him or outside him there is no standard to which he ought to conform.

What HE IS, is the standard of what he ought to be. For him to harm himself would be a wrong so awful that we must not let the mind dwell upon it. And so, while the standard nearest to man is his own nature, the ultimate standard is God's nature. The greatness of God thus becomes the only measure of duty. The majesty of his eternity and of his presence everywhere, the supremacy of his almightiness and his boundless knowledge, in particular the austerity of his holiness and the augustness of his love, are the measure of our obligation to be and to do right. "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."

The thought is tremendous; the responsibility is appalling. "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" But the requirement must not be let down. God cannot acquiesce in any wrong, however trivial. To do so would make an end of his holiness. It would dethrone him. Indeed, he would no longer be our God. He must insist on the inviolability of his perfections with all the energy of his nature, and to all wrong he must oppose all that he is. But who is so good as to live a single day

through as in his sight, doing right not by habit, nor even for the sake of a quiet conscience, but with conscious regard for God? Surely we are far enough from the highest Christian living even in its moral aspect. Or if any one asks why you may not reckon yonder good man a Christian, when you are assured that no one knows any evil of him, that he is certainly a better man than most church members; is not the proper reply obvious enough? He never does right because God requires it. No one pretends that he does. Who, then, can pretend that he leads the highest Christian life, or leads a Christian life at all?

The idea of duty is not the mother of Christian graces; it is their elder sister. Mothers use tact. A wise mother is careful not to see everything that her child does. If she constantly follows up her child, she has become a nagging nurse, a tiresome governess. But the elder sister knows no need of tact. Her eye is on everything. She never lets up. She is quick to say, "You must n't do that. This is what you must do." She is the imperious conscience of her younger brothers



and sisters ; and she ought to be. So the idea of duty knows no relaxation. Its demands are incessant. It insists on them in the most august Name. It asserts, and may claim, the limitless authority of the Supreme Being. Plainly, that man alone meets the requirements of the highest life who not only feels the obligation to obey God, but loyally loves the obligation, is tired of "unchartered freedom," and is chafed by "the weight of chance desires." The ideal is nowhere more adequately set forth than in Wordsworth's familiar Ode to Duty.

"Stern lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face ;  
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,  
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;  
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,  
And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh  
and strong."

No ideal of the highest life is safe which is not stiffened through and through by the highest ideal of duty. Ours is a generation more liable to loosen the moral obligation in religion



than were its predecessors of a century or two ago. The Puritan centuries saw little else in religion, but they saw the religious obligation to sound morals. The wish to rid Christianity of sternness, particularly to soften its doctrine of penalty, threatens at least to impair the sense of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." Now no one ought to be surprised to find a sentiment so widespread in company with eagerly accepted theories of sanctification. And so it comes that, if the old perfectionism would satisfy us of the possibility of sinlessness, it is tempted either to tone God's moral requirement down to man's moral ability, or to admit the existence in a saintly person of "imperfections" which may even require atoning, but need not be called sins; if a great object of the Higher Life is to be blissfully happy, the temptation then is to be rid of all disturbing dread of falling into sin by "casting the responsibility in that matter once for all upon Jesus;" if a Plymouth Brother holds the sinlessness of every "new man" to be beyond question, there is risk of denying accountability for the sins confessedly done in the body; or, if acts of sin intrude into the

conduct of a Keswick disciple, despite his decision once for all to have done with sinning and to "accept God's promise and power for holy living," the temptation is sore to make a point of getting "the inmost temper and disposition transformed," of congratulating oneself on thus much, and letting it go at that. I do not find any company of devout people organized for the betterment of their spiritual life, who do not at the same time need to keep alive the sense of right and wrong more assiduously than possibly some other Christians, who are less bent on exploring the higher ranges of spiritual experience, are less at home with the deep things of God, and have scantier insight into the mysteries of grace. It is when one stands with Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple that the temptation comes to let the angels take care of him, though he cast himself down.

This is but to say that opportunities for doing right are opportunities to do wrong; that all types of the inner life and all aspirations offer their sinister possibilities; that one cannot be exalted in nature and mission even as Christ, without meeting temptations which

could not stand in the path of ordinary men. It is possible that, as in the wilderness, after forty days of fasting and no doubt of deep communings, the first solicitation which befell the Master was to indulgence of sense, so it will be with the docile and loving disciple who spends much time apart, "inviting his soul" and his Lord. In vain the early hermits and some later monks macerated their bodies with hope of escaping this trial. Highly wrought sensibilities, whether of artists or religious devotees, are a source of peculiar and sometimes sudden peril. This ought not to be a matter of wonderment. The emotions which accompany worship are an excitation of the same æsthetic sensibilities with which the artist is concerned. In the latter case the beautiful or the sublime in the physical sphere, in the former case the sublime and the beautiful in the spiritual sphere, are the objects of a sensibility which to the artist often seems religious, and which when religious is still æsthetic. In both cases the emotions, merely as emotions, are identical, however diverse the objects as objects. If it were not so, architecture, music, and oratory, instead of aiding devo-

tion, would always prove to be what sometimes they are, diversions of interest, hindrances not helps to worship.

Duty covers all of religion; obedience is all of perfection. The moral obligation is as wide as the religious, and the religious enforces the whole of the moral obligation. It is a moral duty to be devoutly pious, and a pious duty to be morally faultless. Faith is, indeed, the root principle of piety, but love is its trunk and branches. "Faith works by love." But a love which is not directed to obedience is no part of the Christian life. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Any other love, even if offered to the true God, would be essentially pagan; it would sink the worship of Jehovah into the scandal and iniquity of heathenism, might even repeat the great horror and abomination of mingling immoral rites with the worship of the Holy One. On the one hand, no completeness of obedience to moral laws is short of bottomless disloyalty to God if the heart will neither give itself to him, nor accept him in love; on the other hand, no ardor of religious love is less than a pollution of the

heart's altar, if the sacrifice is wantonly or carelessly immoral.

Whatever, then, the glory and the charm in other and more spiritual elements of the highest life, there is one which, if we could only survey the matter at once from top to bottom and all the way around, would be seen to include them all; namely,—

TO DO RIGHT BECAUSE GOD REQUIRES IT.

### SECTION III.—THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT

**T**O TRUST IN CHRIST BECAUSE HE DESERVES IT, this is spiritual-mindedness at its highest reach. It is a paradox to shame us that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise is perfected. But babes and sucklings instinctively feel that Jesus is to be trusted, while few Christians are mature enough to trust with a faith so childlike. Sometimes they do it when they try, but not all the while and without trying. Ordinarily they dare risk things with Christ. They take their chances that he will look after interests which they are too dim-eyed to see, or too reckless to see to. They have grown accustomed to counting upon him. They are used to short journeys by rail, and most likely will begin to-day's trip without forebodings. But trust in Christ is a poor thing when it is but a calculation of chances, a cool indifference to dangers thus far escaped. At its best, faith is spontaneous and free. It means a deep appreciation, a soul

to soul intimacy, and necessarily marks the highest life.

Surely it would be preposterous to tell any one who seeks admission to the new life that he ought to begin with trusting Christ because Christ deserves it. He should rather be told to trust in Christ because he may. And when a Christian finds his badness a burden, he is not to be told how worthy his Lord is to be trusted in, but should rather be encouraged to trust because his Lord can help him. Yet how far from the highest living! What if the twelve who went with Jesus up and down the land, who knew his ways by night and by day, who saw how he bore himself to the multitude and to his intimates, who watched every look and felt every cadence, — what if it never came into their minds to trust him except when they had a favor to ask! And as to us, who know so much more than they learned from going about with him, who easily grasp the purposes which he was not able to make them see, do we who from infancy have known all the main points concerning him, who for years have proved his faithfulness far beyond our faith, do we, I say, who have even interior experience

of Christ at the very source of our lives, never find trust going out toward him, or enfolding him who dwells within us, except when we wish to wring a gift from him by the compulsion of our prayers? Have we not at length sufficient insight to confide in him when we have nothing to ask for? It is humbling to find it possible that we should feel no delighted reliance upon Christ just because he deserves this from us. Yet it is possible; and it is possible too that we are his; but how dismally low our place! How low our place as he must see it! A good man sometimes has a friend like that; or rather he tries to be friend to a man like that, a man whose trust cannot by any means be won; but not even pitifulness can rate very high a friendship so one-sided.

A man's faith is the measure not only of the good he can get, but of the goodness that is in him. We trust that which we are like; we are like that which we trust. He who trusts in trickery is tricky; he who trusts in honesty is so far honest. If he has confidence in goodness, he thinks he finds it everywhere. The man who has faith in the integrity of men and the purity of women may be compelled by



experience to withdraw his faith, but his faith speaks well for himself. Men and women may not be as good as he believes them, but *he* is good. The slower one is to surrender his trust in his fellows, the better the sign. And how bad a sign not to feel drawn toward Christ. He that is so drawn is himself already Christ-like. The completer the confidence, the completer the resemblance. I doubt whether there is any graver symptom of soul-sickness, apart from downright vice, than the lack of spontaneous, unforced outgoing of trust toward our Lord.

They who never trust in Christ because he deserves it are liable to a sore mistake, to mistake hope for faith. When their hopes are high they rate their faith high, and faith is rated low when hope is low. Now hope is expectation, but faith is sheer trust. Hope often keeps company with faith, but trust may be at its highest when there is no hope at all. You must needs have profound trust in your fellow to submit your wishes to his disposal, when you have no idea whether he will grant them. Yet the highest faith our Lord ever

showed was like that. He prayed thrice in the garden that the cup might pass from him ; but he knew that he must drain the cup. He had no hope ; did he have no faith ? Did he show no trust in his Father when he said, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done" ? Nowhere else did Jesus show faith like this. But it is a great strain of faith to trust without hope, and it is a strain which comes with petitions for benefits. He bore that strain ; can we ? But such a strain never comes when we trust Christ for his sake, not for our own. When we trust because he deserves our trust, we cannot be disappointed. We already have what we long for ; we have HIM.

The cases are many, important, and painful in which we mistake hope for faith. This is why, although I have elsewhere<sup>1</sup> called attention to this very common and very unhappy error, it seems worth while to mention it once more. The pain of it comes from measuring our faith by a false standard. If, for example, some one holds that the prayer of faith will still save the sick, and his sick do not recover, he may take upon his conscience the burden of their con-

<sup>1</sup> See *Religious Use of Imagination*, pp. 112-116.

tinued illness. He blames his lack of faith when he may have lacked only hope. But why should he hope? If when he prayed he had trust enough to leave the issue with God, how could he know what God would do? And why blame himself for not knowing? The burden is often more grievous than this. We pray for the christianizing of a dearly loved friend. We cannot consent to have the prayer unanswered. We find it hard to leave the issue with God, if so to leave it means any uncertainty about the result. But we are hardly able to hope. Even when we force ourselves to hope, and so fancy that faith is growing stronger and prayer more likely to be heard, presently we find to our dismay that hope cannot be made to last. And our fears prove well founded. Our friend remains a victim to scepticism, perhaps to sin. We cannot walk together in the same peaceful path, we cannot make our home together in the household of faith. Whatever the explanation should be, I make bold to say that the weakness of our hope has had nothing to do with the result. The condition of acceptable prayer is not hope but trust.

This distinction has an important bearing on

our attempts to secure the highest spiritual good. Over and again our guides in this matter enjoin us to pray believing that we actually receive the blessing asked for, and then it is surely ours. This, I admit, is no more than the teaching of our Lord in so many words: "All things whatever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye received, and ye shall have them." But are we to take this promise without qualification? It is like that other promise of Christ: "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it." In the former case the condition of an answer is belief that the prayer is already answered; in the latter case the condition is asking in the name of Jesus. Is the promise as absolute in intention as in form? There is no reservation in form, is there none in fact, to the possibilities of prayer?<sup>1</sup> Sometimes one hears a pastor publicly pray that, if there is an unconverted person present, "he may not leave the house unsaved." The prayer is put up in the name of Jesus; but it is not granted, the pastor himself being judge. Is this because the pastor did not expect the blessing he sought? Is it possible that, if he had only

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix on Limited Promises.

hoped, then no one would have left the house unconverted? There is something touching in a concern for all one's parishioners so eager that prayer cannot leave out one of them, but for each and all, even the most obdurate, springs unpremeditated and unrestrainable from the pastor's lips. Is the minister's want of hope fatal to these unyielding souls? If want of hope is the same as want of faith, then the pastor is responsible, because he is bound to have faith; but if faith and hope are not the same, then one may fully trust God without feeling certain what God will grant. Were want of hope all the same as want of faith, and were want of hope what prevents the conversion by "irresistible grace" of all one's loved hearers, what a burden of souls would be on every minister, on every Christian! Is there then no believer of them all who can win down from the all-gracious Father, or work up in himself, hope enough to secure the conversion of one friend? of one congregation? of a whole city? of all his countrymen? of all living men? Really, the promises are not unlimited, and no end of hope could make sure of getting them answered.

Well, then, may it not possibly be a mistake to claim that one can himself, through a sufficient "act of faith," be either at once and permanently delivered from sin, or at least filled full of the Holy Spirit? Is it certain that any one could repeat the success of the Keswick exemplar if he would but say, "Lord, as I breathe in this whiff of warm night air, so I breathe into every part of me Thy Holy Spirit"? Is all which is lacking to any one the desire and the confidence with which these words were first uttered? Is it not possible that one might say in all faith and loyalty, not "I breathe in Thy Holy Spirit," but "I ask for this or that gift of the Spirit, and trust Thee to bestow or withhold the extraordinary blessedness which I seek"? Might not one leave it so and still remain guiltless of hindering God, even although he has no confident expectation of receiving the spiritual gift which he asks for, and, in fact, does not receive it? May not one have faith in Christ because he deserves it, and yet not find that God has selected him for those rare and radiant graces which are like an electric flame that need only be turned toward any quarter to fill the place with light?

But, however poor our faith, faith in Christ because he deserves it will at length be ours. Surely, those who see him as he is, offer him no more meagre faith than this. At last faith is something not to be ashamed of. What he is seen to be irresistibly draws the confidence of all who know him there. Faith will for us no longer be an appeal for forgiveness or succor. It will be an embrace and a possessing, as love will be a loyalty and a gift. But not even love can reveal a higher spirituality than —

TO TRUST CHRIST BECAUSE HE DESERVES IT.

#### SECTION IV. — THE SOCIAL ASPECT

**T**O LOVE THE BROTHER, WHOEVER HE IS, this is the highest life from the point of view of human relations.

It would seem more loyal to Christ, — would it not? — if we loved only the Christ-like. It certainly looks like small regard for him to hold dear one who bears his name and puts it to shame. How does patriotism decide in such a case? American history knows one conspicuous traitor. Did our fathers make it a point of patriotic duty to cherish the name of Benedict Arnold? The more they thought about him, the hotter grew their rage. They abhorred him, loathed him, and were eager to destroy him. It seemed to them that the heavens ought to roar against him, and the land of his birth open to swallow him up. Patriotism has no tolerance for treachery to one's country, and cannot understand a plea for tolerance. How, then, can a good disciple



of Jesus feel other than outraged by the base fellow who makes people doubt whether Christ is a Saviour, and who turns the Christian name into a mockery? No wonder the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said of a renewed man who sins wilfully, "He hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing." We are driven to it; if we love Christ, we must *not* love this man. But is this the rule which Christ gave?

When the day of accounting comes, and the nations stand right and left, he will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it,—to the greatest? to the one most like me? No, to the least, and the unworthiest is the least, of these my brethren,—ye did it to me." How can we come up to such a rule? The rule itself shows us how. If we are dealing with Christ when we deal with a brother, let us look at it so. Has any one tried this? And did he find it hard? What is there that one would not do for his Lord? What that one would not put up with from him? There may be a person in the church who has tried his brethren beyond endurance. It is a scandal to keep him a

member. Every one who could naturally try has tried to set him right. But it occurs to you that you might visit him for once full of the thought that you are not now doing this *for* Christ but *to* Christ. You know you will not be welcome. You know you will be met by a cold look, maybe by a frown. There will be unconcealed signs of impatience, and probably an outburst of anger against somebody, possibly against you. This bad brother will be unpleasant, perhaps insulting.

The case may be still worse. Perhaps the man is hungry because he will not work, in rags because he is a drunkard, sick because he is vicious, and even imprisoned because he has committed a crime. You are ashamed to let them know at the jail that you have had any relations to the wretch. How shameful to have it come out that he is a member of your church! But your steady thought is that you are going to seek your Lord in the prison; that it is Christ you will bear shame for, take food to, and medicine and clothes; that it will be Christ who will tax your patience, scowl at your coming and be glad at your going. It may be hard to imagine all this, but it will be

harder to imagine yourself unwilling to do all this for your Master, if only you may. Oh, this is what he has often had to put up with from you. It was he that stood at the door and knocked, and you that kept him waiting, and sometimes would not let him in at all. It was you that received him with cold looks and was glad when he went. It was you that turned the ear from his counsel, and would have none of his gifts; you who said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," but knew not that you were wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked. And you are willing now that the tables should be turned. Your heart is on fire to do for that wretched church-member all that you may thus do for the Head of the church. You will venture anything, if only it may be ventured for Christ himself. You have learned that Christ-like love is to love the unchristly, that it is most lovely to love the unlovable.

This, surely, is the highest pitch which brotherly love can reach. It would seem the highest pitch which love for Christ can reach. For his sake love undoes itself. Supreme love

for him makes it possible to love those from whom a lower love for him has often bidden us turn our love away. And why not let love go to this length, since it is thus far that Christ's own love can go? When the nations are gathered to be judged by their relations to Christ, they will find themselves judged by their relations to his people. So dear are his people to him that the issue turns on how the meanest of them has been treated. It is the paradox which ever appears in the teaching and the life of Christ. If heaven rejoices, it is over sinners that repent; if heaven's King appears on earth, it is to minister, not to be ministered to. And when at length God highly exalts him, and gives him the name above every name, makes every knee bow to him, and bids him decide the destinies of men, it is still with the Son of Man as it was on earth; he is acting for ends outside himself. What else is fitting in the disciple except to be as his Master? What so exalted for the servant as to be like his Lord? If Christ's own life was and is the highest life, then the highest Christian life is to live for ends outside ourselves. It is,—

TO DO RIGHT BECAUSE GOD REQUIRES IT ;  
TO TRUST IN CHRIST BECAUSE HE DESERVES IT ;  
TO LOVE THE BROTHER, WHOEVER HE IS.

“ For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s.”



III  
THE WAY

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### III

#### THE WAY

##### SECTION I. — PRIVATE PATHS <sup>1</sup>

**T**WO Christian youths were in need of counsel, the one scarcely aware of his need, the other distracted and distressed by it. To the first came an enthusiastic advocate of "holiness through faith" and said, "Christ saves us not *in* our sins, but *from* our sins. Do you believe this?" "Why, yes," said he. "And will you let him do this for you now?" "Surely," was the reply. Immediately his questioner embraced him and said, "You are now delivered from sin." The young man could not help but be deeply impressed, and from that hour held fast an assurance that Christ is near him and for him.

The other was yet a lad, and a premature Pharisee. Often during the day he was seen

<sup>1</sup> The substance in part of this section and the next has appeared in *The Watchman*.

to withdraw into a convenient chamber, and the household took for granted that they had with them a paragon of youthful piety. Years afterward it came out that the unhappy boy, having heard that a Christian must be much in prayer, used often and often to kneel down in a dark clothes-press, half smothered by the hanging garments, and agonize before God because he could not enjoy it. No one asked any questions or offered any counsel. All took the little fellow to be in this thing a pattern for themselves, rather than in sore need of guidance from them. A few years rolled by, and he was now away from home and at school. The old problem still haunted him: how could he truly love God and not love to spend all his hours in reading the Bible and at prayer? His distress became unbearable, and he told it at last to the master of the school. But the schoolmaster made short work of all this perplexity and pain. He merely said, "God does not wish you to spend all your time reading the Bible and praying. He has placed you at school; he wants you to study." And this young man too was comforted.

But how different these cases! How happy that one, how miserable this! And how widely unlike the ways in which they were dealt with! The counsel given to the one led straight to "the rest of faith;" that given to the other drew attention away from his inner life, and permanently bound him to a lifetime of service. Which counsel was correct? What if each youth had received the advice given to the other? The charge to do faithfully the work ready to his hand was not needed by the first, but it transformed the second; and the exhortation to believe that Christ saves us from all our sins could not have solved the younger one's problem. New delight in Christ might have made it pleasanter for a while to commune with him; but nothing could make it pleasant to read the Bible and pray all the day. The human mind will not consent to uniformity of occupation, to monotony of ideas, of even the most delightful ideas. Monks and nuns have tested it. Insanity lies that way. And so by and by it would have been necessary to teach our boy that his school-books were the Bible to which the most of his reading must be given, and the playground a good

place to straighten his knees, if he wanted to bend them to best purpose in his closet.

These are typical cases. Their chief interest is that fixed and opposite bents could be given to two lives by half a dozen words from a trusted religious guide. Other cases are as different. Hence the dire perplexity, if one attempts to fit to all sorts of persons the measures which have proved suitable for a few. This is really so much a matter of course that every one will see it, unless perhaps some of those who are associated in devoted endeavors to deepen the spiritual life. That their attempts should succeed signally, and sometimes as signally fail, ought to be looked for. Individuals differ, and spiritual gifts differ. The Holy Spirit used to distribute his charisms to every man severally as he would; but was there not, and is there not, some correspondence between what a man is and what can be done for him, or through him? If experience leads devout men to believe in measures which have proved helpful to themselves, is not experience just as significant when it leads others to question the universal applicability of these same measures?

One may ride a bicycle across country, pedalling laboriously for half a day through heavy sand; and just where the wheeling is at its worst, he may come to a smooth, hard, softly crackling cinder-path at the roadside, built there by the associated wheelmen of some neighborly village. Here the villagers and their visitors may disport themselves with no end of delight. The like occurs in the spiritual career. Through generation after generation one may see here or there a group of Christian folk in the enjoyment of helps and happiness which are quite local. Elsewhere the people seem to move heavily and unblessed. Particular graces of the renewed life become the specialty of a place. Precisely this occurred again and again with monks and nuns during the best days of their several orders. It was true of the Moravians, and is still pre-eminently true of the Society of Friends. No other body of Christians attain the same self-mastery and equanimity. And the signs are for any one who will look. What other old ladies show faces so calm and sweet as those that are shaded by Quaker bonnets? I have personally witnessed the evidence of similar facts in the

life and spirit of a peculiar little sect, whose doctrines seemed to me in no way to provide for the singular loveliness of their lives. For one I am prepared to believe that such a case is found at Keswick. The beautiful type of Christian experience fostered there may be just as much the specialty of the place and of the people who go there, say what these good people will to disavow it, as a particular kind of diet and an ordered way of living are the specialty of some great sanitarium. Spiritual health-resorts are by no means so preposterous as such a name for them would imply. At all events, there they are. There have been many of them, and their plans are worth looking into, but not necessarily worth following in all companies and all homes. People differ, spiritual disorders differ, remedies differ, and results differ too.

People drawn together by common idiosyncrasies, longings, and tastes notably develop in each other their pet peculiarities. The influence in that direction is potent, and often extends to susceptible but reluctant persons. In the Presbyterian camp-meetings of Kentucky a century ago, it was common enough for godless men who ventured into camp to

become subjects of those curious physical agitations which were called "the jerks," and to go on flinging their arms and legs like any "young convert," while their mouths were filled with blasphemy. Now, good men, bent on gains in the same kind of goodness, stimulate each other prodigiously. It is by no means necessary to deny this in order to see that reasonable question may arise as to whether the same characteristics and the same benefits can be secured for every one, or would be well for every one.

Often these benefits are offered in vain to persons differently constituted. How imagine that certain ministers could become popular and persuasive? If they are to be made eloquent, they must be made into other men. How fancy that ministers who shall be nameless could become either genial or winsome, let them grieve over their naturally repellent ways as much as a good man can grieve for what is not a sin? It would be as hard for them to become gracious as to become graceful after the free manner of polite society. They mourn over it, those unhappy pastors whose sheep and lambs seem to have no liking for their shepherds. But, on the other hand, do



not a few persons we know of seem to have a genius for being happy, and for making others happy? Are not some born to live in peace and to make peace? and some equipped by nature for power? I do not see how the preachers who enthrall us when they tell how high our neglected privileges are, could have been uninteresting before they took up this theme; and, so far as I can learn, no one of them ever was uninteresting.

The Spirit of God allies itself to the qualities which God gave us by birth. Some people naturally revolt at brutal sins; what wonder if as Christians they never fall into these sins? I have known men and women who were constitutionally fitted for towering piety, and many more who were not so. Some have an indubitable turn for spiritual-mindedness. They are the rare ones. It seems a sort of genius. Most men are apt at worldly-mindedness. Is not this what Jesus meant, in his parable of the Sower, by the trodden, the stony, the thorny, and the good soils, — soils variously good, good for anywhere from thirty to an hundred fold? When God set apart Paul from his mother's womb, he made him



Paul, and for Paul's work, not John nor James, not Peter nor yet Judas, nor for their work. Some can say that to them spiritual things are always realities; others secretly grieve because to them spiritual things can rarely seem real. I do not know why we should question that God gives to different disciples quite different aptitudes and quite different graces; or that some, no doubt by fault of their own, are left almost without any grace. Certain of these graces belong as specifically to the intellect as other graces to the heart. I know of good counsellors, and of good people who are always in need of good counsel. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit." What! faith especially granted to some, as it is not to others? It would appear so, whether we look into the Book, or read men's lives. As to all gifts, miraculous and ordinary, Paul wrote: "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

The lessons of experience are distractingly diverse, unless we agree that there are private

paths; let us then notice the teachings of Scripture. A favorite text for immediate "holiness through faith" is what Peter said about the occurrences when he went to Cornelius; namely, "purifying their hearts by faith." There was bitter complaint in Jerusalem against Paul and Barnabas for baptizing Gentiles, and the missionary apostles had come to Jerusalem "about this question." Then Peter said that a good while ago God had chosen him to do the very thing complained of in Paul. For while the gift of tongues had come to *circumcised* believers only *after their baptism*, it was bestowed on Cornelius and his friends while *uncircumcised* and *unbaptized*. The outward sign implied an inward change; and so Peter set up a contrast between purification of the flesh by circumcision and purification of the heart through faith. Thus Peter justified Paul. Nothing in the case implies, everything in the case excludes, the supposition that Peter had in mind not only a regeneration which broke the power of sin, but also a subsequent though early sanctification, which had already before their baptism purged all sin from the hearts of Cornelius and his companions.

The same apostle used the same terms in his first general epistle: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." Was Peter telling the "strangers scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" that they had each and all made what in our day is regarded as the rare attainment of "holiness" and the "fulness of blessing"?

What Scriptural basis is there for the proposed distinction, on our part, between sinlessness and a complete dedication of ourselves to God, to which God, on his part, responds by filling us full with his Spirit? What entireness is there in the self-dedication, if one still yields to temptations? If the self-dedication never gives way to temptation, wherein does it differ from sinlessness? Or, for God's part in the matter, how call that a fulness of the Spirit which leaves the soul haunted by a proclivity to sin? Where are distinctions like these drawn for us in the Book? Where are we told such a contradiction as that we cannot be actually sinless, yet we need not sin?

And where are we instructed to resolve

never to sin again in all our lives? Where enjoined to form such a focus of determination? How can one *intelligently* make a resolution like that? How imagine that one could thus control his future? Who could know how? I do not see that this act of self-dedication in advance, however useful to some, is contemplated for all, or is ever provided for in the New Testament. It seems to me to be an entirely extra-scriptural notion, and subject to the error in which we are almost certain to be involved when we owe our religious doctrines to inference from experience, instead of to the plain teaching of the Book which is wiser than we.

In a brief but valuable exposition by the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan of "The Keswick Teaching" we read that it is only after "the surrender of the entire being to him [God] and simple faith that he will perform what he is able and has promised," only after this act of our own that "the Spirit purifies and then takes full possession of the whole being, flowing into every avenue of the life, illuminating and energizing, and that the soul so purified and possessed need no more actually commit

wilful sin." Again, that "this is not finality. . . . The Holy Spirit actually in possession of his own is now unhindered in his blessed work of transforming us into the likeness of Christ;" and finally, that "Christian service begins here and should only be attempted thus."<sup>1</sup> If now we are to accept these statements as safe for guidance, where is the authority for this last position that, until we have attained to this rare and exalted state, we cannot do any good to others, and we ought not to try? "Christian service begins here and should only be attempted thus!" What persons then did the gracious Spirit employ in converting most of us? Was it not average fathers and mothers, average Sunday-school teachers and average pastors? It must have been average men and women, or there is no such thing as an average. Surely no one will pretend that he is a commonplace Christian who possesses all the lofty attainments heard of at Keswick.

But we have not yet lit upon the ways which

<sup>1</sup> *Exactly What Is Meant by "Northfield and Keswick Teaching,"* by Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, — a tract, fourth page, — Fleming H. Revell Co. Also by same author, *The Spirit of God*, p. 227.

can be recommended to all as ways of reaching the highest life. These that we have been peering into are indeed beaten paths, but they are private paths. They lead along fair glades and through inviting groves; they wind among sumptuous fountains and beds of dazzling flowers; but the place looks like a private park. The gates are thrown open; but what warrant is there that we would all find ourselves at home here? We must at least ask whether there are not highways unmistakably public, and an open common, which, though it may not be so beautiful, is wholesome, sun-bathed, shaded too for sultry days, and belongs to us all.

To summarize the conclusions thus far reached concerning the way into the highest life, and to state them as explicitly as possible: It is the testimony of experience, of experience illustrated in the case of prophets and apostles, as well as enforced by their teachings, that differences by birth involve differing spiritual types; that God's grace does not annul this diversity, and that measures helpful to some are inappropriate to others. This native and

permanent diversity extends to every element of the religious life, and expedients to improve that life must to some extent vary accordingly. Thus it is matter of common observation that entire races of men, as well as individuals of the same race, are strikingly unlike in moral sensibility, with the result that individuals and races tolerate in themselves moral delinquencies which would shock other individuals and races. An individual, a race, or a generation may be stolidly indifferent to spiritual realities to which other persons or other times may be quite awake. Curious disparity appears in temperamental capacity for enjoyment, or for the equanimity which is necessary to wisdom. Conspicuous enough is the dissimilarity in fitness for social ties; that is, the qualification to love and be loved is as glaringly unlike in different people as their stature, complexion, or features. Such differences never entirely disappear, are only modified, as physical differences can be modified. To obliterate them would be to undo the fact which, more than any other except rationality, characterizes mankind, and which civilization emphasizes; to wit, men's capacity for infinite variety.



It follows that the graces which charm us in some good Christians are virtually unattainable for others. It is equally clear that measures suitable to develop existing capabilities or to correct known defects, must differ as foods and medicines differ. "What is one man's meat is another man's poison" is but a homely statement, the analogue of which is that the spiritual nourishment and the spiritual medicament useful to some individuals are disastrous to others. Nothing could well be more misleading than to infer from the pre-eminent spiritual charm and power of a few gifted and saintly persons that what they are all others might be, or that what they believe "made them to differ" could be used to make us all alike.

Warned away, then, from a conclusion often carefully fostered, but which has proved hurtful and disheartening, we turn to inquire whether there are not paths which may lead us one and all into that highest life which all can believe in,—a life for objects outside ourselves, for objects which may be found in a God to obey, a Christ to trust, a brother to love.



## SECTION II. — PUBLIC HIGHWAYS

**P**ATHS open for all lead toward the goal of the highest life. ONE is himself the Way, the Truth, the Life. Whatever the methods for reaching the goal, he is the only means. Our problem is how, in valid sense, to walk in him as the Way, think according to him as the Truth, be animated by him as the Life. I am not about to propose any novelties ; but the most familiar measures of the new life take on a special significance in their relation to the highest life.

If the first to be considered is an abundant use of the Bible, the chief value of the Bible in this connection is not as a lamp to our feet. Information as to what to do and not to do is not what we most require from the Bible as a help toward the best living. Nor is it incentive which we need from its pages. I take it that, to one who is entering the higher stages of Christian living, the Bible is chiefly valued

as a means of intimacy with his Master. Whether life in Christ is a mystical union or not, here at least is no mystery. Jesus told his disciples, "I have called you friends : because all things that I heard from my Father I made known to you." When one opens his heart to a friend he gives decisive evidence that he wishes for intimacy. Hence the disgust at such openness when intimacy is not welcome. Our Lord makes an overture of this kind to us. He is intimate with his Father, he desires to be intimate with us ; and he carries his wishes to the length of making one intimacy the measure of the other. He tells us whatever his Father tells to him. He thus seeks to make us intimates of his Father too. And when the time came that he could no longer talk with his disciples, then he sent to them One who could speak for him, and who would tell them all about him. The new relation was to be of the same sort as the relation about to be given up. "All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." Our Friend is still bent on sharing with us his Father's heart, and would even force us into

this place by revealing the secrets of the Father's breast.

Now, whoever communes with Christ in reading his Book has a deeper delight in this communion than in any special profit to himself from the reading. What could Christ give which would be equal to the privilege of his intimacy or which would not come with intimacy? Here, I think, is explained the delight which the best disciples take in reading their Bibles. Now and then they seem to hear a quite new message from their Lord. The Spirit is guiding them into truth. But higher still is the value which any secret, however simple, has, if it is breathed by one loving heart into another which is its best beloved. It need not be for the sake of fathoming the deep things of God, for quite likely no ambition of that kind is felt by the loving disciple. And it need not be anxiety to learn just what to do; because the Bible is not a book of precepts, and the good disciple is not often greatly at a loss about his Lord's will in matters of conduct. It is the voice of Christ that the disciple delights to hear. Christ begins it, you see, tells his thoughts to his friends, and he that would

belong to that inner circle must ever be listening for the Master's voice.

A second method of coming into the closest relations with him who is the Way, Truth, and Life, is by meditation. Meditation is not solving problems in theology. Meditation is contemplation. It is a steady gaze at its object, as people in picture galleries gaze through a roll of blackened tin, or through their nearly closed fist; until the painting seems to have atmosphere, and all the objects in it stand forth to tell their meaning.

Meditation is as variously useful as a vision of spiritual things must needs be. It is especially adapted for stimulating, for steadying, and for making wise. By it a new affection becomes expulsive, and an old affection is fixed. One of the commonplaces of moral science of which the utmost use is made in these days, a practical matter which is looked at as of deep philosophical meaning, is that the direct way to bring one's life under control of the noblest motives is to turn attention to the objects which one ought to prize. Every one knows how perilous it is to dwell

on that which he ought not; and happy they who have learned something like the full use of thinking often and steadily about what they ought. It was Paul's prescription to his beloved Philippians. All that he had to say he rounded off with this: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." I can find no other sure meaning in Paul's familiar account of himself, "To me to live is Christ," except that love made thinking about Christ, and thinking made love to Christ and service of Christ, the absorbing employment of his life. There is no substitute for meditation. It is the most invigorating of heart-tonics. And the stimulation is not quickly spent. It is not like a spur; it is more like blood transfused, or like a medicine which is also a food. The aspirant for the highest life must "think on these things." If he does, he will find in thinking of them a zest which increases with familiarity.

Rare and beautiful is the grace of unswerving steadiness of soul. Mr. Greatheart is

needed in every company that "goes on pilgrimage." Reflection on the highest certainties is what keeps the courage high and the spirit serene. Affliction is light and works a weight of glory; we faint not, though our outward man perish, providing we look at the things which are not seen. This was Christ's own way. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, and so we are to look unto him. A firm and quiet spirit will surely be the ornament of an attentive and thoughtful mind.

The way of thoughtfulness is the way of wisdom too. No small responsibility falls to the share of any who are obviously well advanced in Christian living: people come to them for counsel in spiritual things. The service is so delightful to render that a deal of bad counsel is risked. So often and so deeply delighted at seeing truth as he had never seen it before is the man who lives in the fear of God, that he is by and by tempted, especially if often resorted to for advice, to overweening and presumptuous confidence in his opinions. To be free or relatively free from fault seems all one, as already mentioned,

with being free or relatively free from error. Thoughtfulness, meditation aloof, is needed to make and to keep him wise. Inconsiderate judgments even by the really sanctified are likely to be foolish judgments. It is a sad thing to have the reality of high spiritual attainments clouded by an unwisdom, a witlessness, at which the light-minded laugh and the true-hearted grieve. The wisdom which cometh from above is pure and peaceable, and it is not hasty nor vain.

It would seem almost needless to mention prayer as a third measure indispensable to the highest spiritual attainments, if it were not that some who "seem to be pillars" tell us how they made their great step forward when they ceased to pray, and merely said, "I accept." Now looking to God for benefits is the very essence of prayer, and it is likely that they are so looking and really praying when they think they have given over prayer. But there is risk in ceasing expressly to ask. It may not be as safe as some think to give up asking for forgiveness. Although Paul did not know anything against himself, he did not



conclude that God knew nothing against him. "I am conscious to myself of nothing; yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judges me is the Lord." Who should think there can be no sin in him to forgive because he is aware of none? He may be unaware because his sins are too subtle for dull eyes to detect. It may even presumably be that he particularly needs forgiveness because he feels no need.

The opposite mistake is to assume that, unless we pray specifically for the Holy Spirit, other prayers will avail us little. This point is often pressed much beyond the Scripture's teaching. We must be particular, they say, to make it prayer for the Holy Spirit, or else our prayers for the Highest Life will somehow go astray and miss their mark. Now it is the Holy Spirit himself who helps our petitions, even when "we know not what to pray for as we ought." The groanings which we cannot utter, the heart-rending desires which we cannot define, these the Spirit understands, because they are his own intercessions for us; and he makes that intercession according to the will of God. If, then, we would be right before God, or if we would be lights in the world,



do we have to make sure that our minds are fastened precisely upon this, not Christ as our hearts' desire, but the Holy Spirit as our strength? This is dangerously like a merely mental act, or salvation by dogma, and that not a scriptural dogma.

Fourthly, for the Highest Life nothing is more indispensable than Christian labor. This is taught in the most explicit way by our Lord. He unfolds at large the relation of intimacy in which he would remain with his disciples. It should be organic, vital, like that of a vine to its branches. But almost every verse in that wonderful passage tells us that the branches are in the vine for the sake of fruit, and will be allowed to remain there only on condition of fruit-bearing. So shall we be Christ's disciples, and so shall his joy be in us, and our joy be full. Work, work, work, this is health and growth and life.

The happiness which work assures is not the dominant aim, but it is an accompaniment of the best living. The greatest of modern philosophers, Emmanuel Kant, held that to do right is the supreme good, but declared that

it was not the highest good. Righteousness with happiness is the highest good. This, he thought, is the demand of the practical reason, the conviction, we would say, of good sense. The permanent misery of the righteous would be the permanent confusion of the moral universe. It is a view in which we instinctively acquiesce in spite of fear lest too much be made of happiness. Nothing can dissuade the normal mind from a conviction that the highest Christian living must be the happiest living. When happiness is extraordinary, the life hidden with Christ in God gets the credit of unusual vigor; and when happiness fades away, that divine life seems to be waning too. Now, there is only one source of enjoyment, and that is activity. Exercise, voluntary or involuntary, conscious or unconscious, is the indispensable and exclusive cause of pleasure. But powers unemployed begin with causing discomfort, and end in ease only when they end in atrophy. What is rest but active repair of wasted tissues? What are amusements but devices for cajoling us into acting with all our might? Action and always action is the condition both of well-being and the sense of well-

being. If, then, there is any significant tie between the Highest Life and the highest happiness, and we cannot persuade ourselves that there is not, there is as significant and close a bond between the Highest Life and the activity which is not only the sign but the source of this health.

The way to the Highest Life is at its culmination in activity for others than ourselves. Such activity belongs to its very nature. If so, it ought to yield the liveliest joy; and so it does. To be sure, such labor is often intrusive. This strikes us perhaps unpleasantly when we think of imitating the best exemplars. Unselfish devotion to their fellows impels them to many a risk of rebuff. I recollect reading some years ago in a New York newspaper a tart complaint from a newly arrived German. As soon as he set foot on our shores an impertinent tract distributor had thrust a tract into his hand, saying a word to him about his soul and eternal interests. Perhaps our immigrant did not feel sure that he had a soul or a future; certainly he wanted no stranger to meddle with them. Years ago a man used to go up and down the canals

in Chicago, speaking to people he had never met, about matters which they did not care to hear of from him. He was meddlesome without doubt; but he meddled to such purpose that he grew famous as a meddler. They had him to other cities and into the churches. Though not ordained a minister he was presently found meddling with pastors and people, and few could resist him. Those who worked with him had to give up their plans and fall in with his plans. He was heard of beyond the seas. He meddled with Glasgow and Edinburgh, with Manchester and Birmingham, with Liverpool and London. He even crossed to the continent and meddled as much as he could with Paris and Berlin. People said he was intrusive, but admitted that he had his way. His great, tired frame has lately been laid to rest; but now that his work is done, no one dreams that it cost that remarkable man Moody any spirituality or happiness, nor that it lowered the grade of his usefulness to men that he interfered with them.

I heard of a runaway along the principal business street of the city where I was a student. The horse ran on the sidewalk, dragging

his driver, who had become entangled in the reins. Men and women darted into doorways and stairways to escape the risk to themselves, and to avoid seeing what would happen the next moment to that poor man. All felt that it was no affair of theirs. All but one, who was on the other side of the street, and who hurried across, seized the horse, and clung to him, every man knows at what risk, until he had got him into the carriage-way, and across the street, and stopped him there. And when the deed was done, the man who had done it stood all pale and trembling, like the one whose life he had saved. It was an heroic thing to do ; but it was not his business. It was a thing to be proud of, to tell of, and be asked to tell again, to his children and his children's children ; but it was none of his business. All the other men and women there saw that it was none of their business ; but he made it his business, and he saved a man's life. Oh to risk something, something of sensibility, of sensitiveness, of more than sentiment, for the sake of grappling with life's runaways. Oh for something to do at cost to ourselves, if we may, for the sake of service to some one not our-

selves. Oh to live for others, for Christ, for the gospel of God's grace, for men, because in men alone we can do what God would have us do, and in them find Christ himself within reach of our service. It is the highest life and the happiest, but its happiness is not in self-seeking. It is in that which makes such a life the highest; it is in living always for objects that are outside ourselves, for God and duty, for Christ and men.

The Book and meditation, praying and toiling, these are the open highways to the Highest Life.

### SECTION III.—THE ISSUE'S ISSUE

THE reader may properly ask what is the net outcome of this discussion?

It is at least believed to be that we are in a position to estimate the truth and error in the various schemes for deepening the spiritual life. We are able, or ought now to be able, to account for the baffling and bewildering alternation of successes and failures which have thus far attended every special project for winning the highest prizes of the Christian's calling. Such an alternation piques interest and at the same time discourages endeavor; it both enkindles hope and arouses suspicion. To straighten out the tangled lines of experience and opinion is of no small moment; and unless we can do so, this present attempt to bring eager souls into accord by offering a view of the highest life which all can accept, will turn out to be one more contribution to the confusion and disheartenment. Yet even if our case is as bad as this, it may in the end prove to be what every previous

attempt has proved, a step clear of some earlier entanglements, a step planted a little further upon firm ground.

The Keswick platform, as we have seen, is free from objections to which earlier platforms were open. The general objections which hold against it lie also against all the rest, except the quite antithetic doctrine of the Plymouth Brethren. This latter has perhaps been sufficiently considered; it is not now especially in evidence, while the Keswick views and plans alone hold a large place in the attention and respect of our devouter church members. This is due to the attractiveness of its leaders, the moderation of their claims, and in this country to the conspicuousness which has been afforded them by their association with Mr. Moody. The Keswick "movement," having for the Protestant churches displaced the other movements, alone needs to be specially considered in this summary, especially as it presents a defect, as before noted, common to them all. This pre-eminent defect may now be estimated.

The radical difference between the highest life as herein set forth and that fostered at



Keswick is that the one is distinctly positive and active, the other predominantly negative and passive. The highest life, as we have seen, consists in obedience Godward, faith Christward, love manward. In the Keswick view the one positive fact to be dealt with is sin. Known sin, it is urged, vitiates the piety and dwarfs the usefulness of many who earnestly try to be useful. To put down sin, a negative result, seems the pre-eminent need, and calls for all the activity which is prescribed at Keswick. And this activity is only preliminary. It is but the disciple's preparation of himself for God to act upon. The culmination of the Keswick aims, the specialty and crown of the processes there prescribed, is the "infilling of the Spirit;" and this infilling demands from the postulant a studied and scrupulous passivity.

Now this negativeness is a shortcoming which has always marked not only the perfectionist schemes in general, but the quietistic and other forms of mysticism in particular, and in the end has proved their undoing. Under the sagacious and temperate leadership which has thus far distinguished the Keswick

movement from all its predecessors, and especially with its growing purpose, as seen in this country, of turning all spiritual gains to the advantage of other men, that is, of regarding the *use* of spiritual gifts rather than the *enjoyment* of them as the highest phase of spirituality, it would seem reasonable to hope that the Keswick movement may escape the disasters which hitherto have never failed to visit all concerted and continuous efforts to attain high spirituality through measures believed to be happily devised for this purpose. It is by no means intended to charge upon these distinguished and useful Christians the deficiencies in character which the deficiencies in their avowed system might lead to; but "things follow their tendencies," and it is indispensable to show to what in this case they tend, to what in less happy cases they have led. The place in the Keswick scheme of negative aims and of passivity appears in the proposed relations with God, with Christ, and with the Holy Spirit.

I. So far as the highest life is a relation with God, every right-minded Christian appreciates and shares the outpourings of Hebrew

piety concerning God's law. The devout Chalmers said that his habitual mood was expressed by the words of a psalm, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." But the defect of Keswick negativeness appears both in its rule and its motive with regard to obedience. "Avoid all known sin" is not the same as "Do right because God requires it." The one is negative, the other positive. It is a characteristic result, against which the Keswick disciples need to be on guard, that to adopt the negative maxim is to measure duty by one's own moral obtuseness, and to be satisfied then is a moral dereliction; while to follow the positive maxim is to measure duty by the ideal constitution of man and the all-perfect nature of God, and never to be satisfied.

To succeed in avoiding all known sin would not be a proof of the highest life. Christians only a little above the average, in some cases unmistakably below the average, are easily satisfied with their course of life, while the moral sense of men and women not so good as they is far from being satisfied with them. I am afraid that worldly people sit in judg-

ment on church folk, and there is no gain-saying the verdict when they condemn the self-satisfied. It is further still from the best life to be contented with one's inner state. A mere babe in Christ feels so. He thinks he will never sin again. He abhors sin. His gorge rises at it. But none too soon he learns what a delusion it is to fancy that freedom from all known sins is freedom from all sin. It was the miserable mistake which Paul described: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." The seventh of Romans often follows the eighth. Conflict succeeds to victory. The campaign is lifelong. To-day the word is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" to-morrow it may be, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me?" To deny this is to out-Calvin the outermost Calvinists; these contend for no more than that God will rescue his own from their backslidings, while we would be saying that the advanced Christian will never backslide.

No candid and kindly observer is blind to the serene graces in many a mature Christian which are wanting, though sensibility enough

is present, with the babe in Christ. But in both cases the liabilities are a good deal alike. They may be even graver for the veteran than for the recruit. Both are extremely liable to place undue confidence *in confidence*. To feel safe is not all the same with being safe, either for ostriches that hide their heads, or for men who shut their eyes. A special, subtle, and sometimes notorious peril for those who seek to be sanctified is the temptation to hush one's own conscience, to hold fast the sense of freedom from sin only by refusing to take blame to oneself for what is blameworthy. Of all mistakes it is the most hurtful to oneself and to a repute for special sanctity. It is no less than disloyalty to God, disloyalty the more grievous because it goes to the length of an attempted self-deception on that very point. A merely negative interpretation of one's duty Godward — namely, that it consists in freedom from known sin — must not be accepted as a correct account of the highest life.

Nor is any negative *motive* adequate for the best results. The Keswick programme does not prescribe any motive. It begins: "1. Immediate abandonment of every known sin and

doubtful indulgence." But the Bible is specific enough about motives. The only sufficient motive to obedience which the Bible knows is love. Lower motives may lead up to riddance from "every known sin and doubtful indulgence." A motive adequate for self-correction to this extent is sometimes found in a desire to be right, in a weariness of the struggle with temptation and a longing for peace of mind, or in an eagerness for success in pastoral labors. These motives are not unpraiseworthy. They are widely felt, and are effectively appealed to, though no motive is enjoined in the writings and the addresses of Keswick leaders. Like a hardened sinner's fear of hell, they may be motive enough to begin with, enough to lead to higher motives; but they are not sufficient for the Highest Life. Love alone is "the fulfilling of the law." How immense, how very *positive*, the requirement! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Such a motive is itself the soul's highest attainment Godward, the complete fulfilment of its purely Godward obligations! How meagre any lower and nameless motive!

The life, then, which follows the Keswick directory in its Godward relations without deviation, but without enlargement of its scope, may be, and to observation often is, a beautiful and holy life; but it is not, and cannot be, the Highest Life. In its Godward relations the Highest Life is actual righteousness because God requires it; and the only motive to perfect obedience is the heart's unswerving and positive loyalty, love to God with all the energy, and in every variety, of which a moral being is capable.

II. In its relations to CHRIST the type of life recommended at Keswick is curiously defective. It will not, I think, be denied, that the highest faith toward Christ is faith because he deserves it. But a faith which in the name of Christ seeks deliverance, or peace, or power, is trust in him not really for his sake, but for one's own sake. At no other spiritual crisis except at coming into the new life, and it would not hazard much to say that, as to a majority of present day conversions, not even in entering the new life, is longing for benefits to oneself so accentuated as in the search for spirit-



ual good which the Keswick teaching stimulates and guides. Not that such desires and faith are wrong. We do well to "covet earnestly the best gifts ;" yet there is "a more excellent way." The ideal faith, like the ideal love, is a free response to the worth of our Lord.

This deficiency, suggested by comparison with the Highest Life, is made more impressive by a fact or two which seem to the student of Keswick aims and measures like a singularity that needs accounting for. This fact, for example: of the seven possible degrees the second alone refers in any way to Christ; and this degree or step is only a preparation for the final and passive reception of the Holy Spirit's infilling. It has been charged upon the Plymouth Brethren that they exalt too exclusively the work of Christ in its legal relations, and by consequence neglect, if they do not disparage, the work of the Holy Spirit in its vital relations. The exact reverse, it would seem, might be alleged against the Keswick platform. Even if its singular disregard of Christ is but an inadvertence, such an inadvertence tells of the prevailing negative character of the Keswick scheme.



The impression of a strange lack is not lessened when we duly weigh the nature of the only relation to Christ that finds mention in the Keswick platform. This platform, as will be remembered, prescribes the steps of approach to the highest life. As given in an earlier form,<sup>1</sup> the relation to Christ is the sixth step, and is emphasized; but as given in a later form from the same hand,<sup>2</sup> it is but the second step, and has the peculiar character to which attention must be called. It runs thus: "2. Surrender of the whole being to Jesus Christ not only as Saviour, but as Master and Lord." In some other connection these words would not seem amiss; here they are unhappily significant. They introduce a favorite Keswick term, "surrender." "The surrendered life" seems to be the Keswick type of the highest life. But surrender is a mere negation. It may even reach the pitch of a true denial of self; but when the issue is between positive and negative relations to Christ, what is needed is not so much denial of self as assertion of Christ. Devotion, not submission, is his right

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. T. Pierson in *The Story of Keswick*, pp. 78 and 89.

<sup>2</sup> In the circular appeal of thirty-three persons "To all who love our one Lord," etc., p. 2.

and our duty. Real lordship is lordship over our active powers. Christ's reign is over hearts. As Peter puts it, "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (R.V.). Love, let it be remembered, is the mightiest of human impulses. It defies loss, torment, and death. It is by no means a mawkish sentimentality. It is the most masculine of energies, the most capacious of motives, mightiest in the mighty. Love holds out where all else fails, and conquers every conqueror. I repeat, not passive surrender to Christ, but active devotion to Christ, is the informing principle of the highest life. This, surely, would have been a plank in the Keswick platform if the minds that built the platform had not been taken up with infilling of the Spirit as the true goal, and had not rated every other element in the Christian life by its worth as a preparation for receiving this supreme gift.

How far a surrender to Christ falls short of accepting him on his own terms we may know from that word of his: "Abide in me and I in you." This does not sound like "Surrender to me." And Paul says, "Christ is our life." Lordship pales before life. The pagan gods

may be lords, "as there are gods many and lords many," but no pagan ever dreamed that his god was his life. How immeasurably larger is anything worth calling a life in Christ than that submission to his lordship which forms the second step in the Keswick platform, and which is the only notice that platform takes of Christ! Paul wrote to the Romans, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and death"; are life and freedom only a surrender? To the Corinthians he wrote, "If any one is in Christ he is a new creature;" is it a negation to be newly created? His words to the Galatians were startling: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me;" the terms mean that Paul has perished, and Christ lives in his place, but does Paul mean that the life of Christ in him leaves him thenceforth no place anywhere? To the Philippians his very definition of life was Christ: "To me to live is Christ." To the Colossians he sent an assurance, "Your life is hidden with Christ in God," and a promise, "When Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then will ye also be manifested with him in

glory ;” he even says, “ We are risen with Christ ;” does the resurrection of Christ repress and crush us, or does it animate and transfigure us?

Some follower of the Keswick movement will surely take this criticism to be a disparagement of his leaders. It will seem to make them deny that life in Christ is positive and active, and to his mind will even imply that they are living without Christ. Now no mistake or misunderstanding could be more unwelcome to the writer; but there is one which could be more hurtful to the reader, and that would be to mistake the graces of the Keswick saints for the merits of the Keswick system. A shrewd observer says he never knew a successful man who could explain his own success. Here the suggestive, the essential fact is that the *published plan* for achieving the highest life barely mentions Christ, prescribing only a negative relation to him, a surrender, and that too as but the second out of seven steps. The highest life proposed by this plan is not a life in Christ, but a sheer “infilling of the Holy Spirit,” — a state which is five high steps above the required relation

to Christ. This slighting of Christ may be inadvertent, but it is actual, and is germane to the objects avowed. Once more we witness the strength of a tendency never yet escaped by specialists in sanctification, — a tendency to reduce spirituality to a passive submission, to set up as the ideal a wholly indefinable “infilling,” and to make every other interest bend to this interest. Let us briefly turn our gaze as full as we may upon this dazzling goal.

III. A relation to THE HOLY SPIRIT is beyond doubt an element in the highest life. As it is the one factor on which the Keswick circle sets a supreme value, so to many other people it is an object of fascinated wonder. With the verdict upon this single point everything special in the Keswick pretensions will stand or fall. So exclusively special, so all-important, is the infilling that only those who have shared it are allowed to take part in the Keswick conferences.

Now, when Paul would not have the Corinthians ignorant concerning spiritual gifts, the point he seems most solicitous about is to assure them that they all share those gifts.

For although they were at one time all carried away to dumb idols, now they are all led by the Spirit to say that Jesus is Lord. The entire chapter insists that, various as the gifts are in different persons, they are all from the same Source. As he tells the Romans, "If any one has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." So far, the ordinary and familiar doctrine is in harmony with Paul's teaching. That current doctrine is that the Spirit, by whom we are born again, abides with us always; that the relation thus begun provides for all spiritual gifts; but that, as in the case of every other companion, it depends on ourselves in large part how far this Companion's voice is heard and his help used. The Keswick doctrine, on the contrary, is that, after a prodigious activity in preparing himself, the Christian passively receives an infilling which is not included in the gift of the Spirit at the new birth, and cannot be secured except in a special way. When we had occasion to notice those doctrines of sanctification which no longer receive general attention, it was enough to mention the particulars in which experience had shown them to be at fault. But we are now to decide about

a living and vigorous doctrine. It is still before the court of experience. Trials in that court last long; and if, before judgment is rendered, we are to make a provisional test at all, this to the minds of its adherents must be done by the Scriptures. The strain of the inquiry is almost painful. It will not stop short of the issue whether the admired men of Keswick, incited and warned by the confusing and disappointing claims of earlier perfectionists, have at length found concealed in Scripture the secret of a transcendent privilege hitherto undiscovered and unused, a treasure hidden in a field, which eager souls have surmised might be there, but could never find, nor make sure was there. Do the Scriptures, then, prescribe a special preparation for a special infilling which is to be received in a passive state? The problem is evidently threefold: as to 1, the special filling; 2, the special preparation; 3, the passive reception.

1. As to the infilling. The terms "full of the Holy Spirit" and "filled with the Holy Spirit" undoubtedly suggest a relation much closer than the ordinary relation. They might



naturally be taken to mean that human nature could receive no more. Such a condition would indeed be extraordinary, if not altogether unexampled. Whether these terms are so tense with meaning may easily be tested by aid of a concordance, or of the late Mr. MacGregor's faithfully compiled "The Things of the Spirit." What shall we find first; what one accustomed to the Bible's statements would expect, — namely, that the words "full" and "filled" are sometimes used in a qualified sense; as when Paul tells the Roman Christians that they are "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge." Did he mean that they could not be better, nor know more? In looking over the texts which speak of certain persons as "full of the Holy Spirit," one can hardly believe that these persons had all reached the limit of their capacity. The reader catches rather the idea that these persons, either habitually or on special occasions, received not the largest possible, but a larger measure of the Spirit's influence than other persons knew or other occasions required.

And to what end? To every end except the end contemplated by the Keswick programme.



On no occasion is it clear that any one of these persons was endued by the infilling of the Spirit with the highest spirituality. There in the wilderness, when the tabernacle was to be made, were Bezaleel and his fellow metal-workers, gem-cutters, and wood-carvers of cunning hand, "filled" with the inspiration of clever artists; and there on the plains of Moab, when the task of Moses had been completed, was Joshua, "full of the spirit of wisdom," for Moses had laid his hands on him. In the hill country of Judea, ages afterward, there was Elizabeth at Mary's salutation prophesying, and a little later her husband recovering his speech to prophesy too. And there was John, their son, full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, quite a man apart for a service apart in every way; and Jesus also, after John baptized him, filled by the Holy Ghost, for his mission, I suppose, was led into the wilderness to be tempted. And then the common people, disciples in great numbers, who spake with tongues at Pentecost; who, when Peter and John were let go, prayed for signs and wonders to make them bold, and the place was shaken, and they all spake with boldness; and

at Antioch in Pisidia too, where the devout women and chief men had Paul and Barnabas expelled out of their coasts, while "the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost." And Stephen and the rest of the seven, spiritual and wise to disburse the church's dole; Stephen, when they stoned him, full of divine vision and words of forgiveness as divine. We find Peter in the fulness of the Spirit opening the gospel to the rulers in Jerusalem; and Barnabas sent forth from Jerusalem to look into matters as far as Antioch, who at what he saw was glad, good man; a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith, who exhorted much and, best of all, set Saul of Tarsus at the work of his apostolate. Saul himself, at an earlier day, waiting for Ananias to lay hands on him, that he might recover sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost; and that same Saul (now also called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, setting his eyes on Elymas, full of all subtlety and mischief, that the sorcerer might lose his sight and go about for some one to lead him by the hand.

We find these cases; and these are all the cases mentioned when men were filled with the Holy Spirit except one, and that one was

not a case of actual filling, but an exhortation to be so filled, instead of drunk with wine. Of all the infillings, real or recommended, this is the only one which suggests any unequivocal gain in spirituality. "Be not swept by drunkenness into rioting, but inspired by the Spirit with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." The exhortation points to some more becoming happiness than merriment over wine-cups, but does not hint at the peculiar, climactic "infilling" under discussion. It is certain that in not one among all the biblical references to fulness of the Spirit, unless by bare possibility the obviously unique cases of John the Baptist and our Lord, is the infilling represented as an exaltation of him who receives it into a special kind of living, as distinguished from a qualifying of him for special service.

If, then, some one prefers to take these illustrations of spiritual gifts as a pledge to modern Christians of similar helps not for "life," but for service, this assurance may be accepted with circumspection. To accept it without reserve as thoroughly applicable now would be to do precisely what mystics have ever presumptuously done. They have always

been persuaded that the spirit of prophecy belonged to them, and in consequence have sooner or later set up their own authority in favor of an extension or emendation of the doctrines which are derived by common consent from Holy Writ. In this particular the rationalist or Hicksite Friends and the polished adherents of the New Theology are at one with the old-time mystics from Montanus to Swedenborg. But if we do not see in these New Testament occurrences miracles now renewed in our behalf, yet find in them none the less an assurance that the Holy Spirit is the constant ally of the church, the ever present substitute of Jesus with each one of us for companionship, for championship, for good counsel and strength to meet our constant and our changing needs, according to the welcome we give him, then we may claim for our belief the undisputed and faithful promises of the Book and the unceasing Amen of the Christian centuries. From the outpourings and infillings mentioned in the Acts it may be safe to infer that the Holy Spirit will accord to us, as he accorded to the early church, special aid in special cases; but it is quite

another thing to infer that nothing special can be accomplished through the ordinary operation of the ever indwelling Spirit. It is from an unwarranted assumption of the latter kind that almost all the fanatical and mischievous extravagance of opinion and of conduct in connection with this subject has sprung.

2. As to special preparation for the Spirit's infilling, it should be enough to say that a requirement of this sort is entirely wanting in the New Testament. The Keswick platform lays down six conditions for an infilling of the Holy Spirit. They have already been stated in full, but may be recapitulated as follows: 1, abandonment of sin; 2, surrender to Christ; 3, acceptance of God's help; 4, mortification of "the self-life;" 5, change of disposition; 6, separation unto God for sanctification and service. It is plain that, if there is any gift of the Holy Spirit which can be made sure of only when these exacting conditions have been fulfilled by human wills, that gift must be far from commonplace in character, and far from common in experience. No one can fail to see that these would be great steps to take.

No one can know that they have not many a time been taken. But we do know that the New Testament never in set terms plants so portentous conditions as these in the way of the best gifts. God does not hinder his Spirit all that he properly can. He gives the Spirit ungrudgingly. He does not exact from us a complete self-conquest before he will himself arrive with a blessing. We may assert with absolute certainty that Jesus did not so hedge his promise when he foretold the coming of the Comforter. If he had done so, we would now be orphans indeed. Or, if not orphans all, then so many of us that the Church without the Comforter would, like the world, be lying in the Wicked One, and the bride of Christ be fit only to be divorced from her Lord. Keswick professes great deference to the Bible. I own to a feeling of wonderment when I read of steps which the Bible does not prescribe leading to a blessing which the Bible does not offer. The sentiment with which history meets such adventures in extra-biblical doctrine and practice is not a sentiment of hope and cheer, but one of apprehension and despondency.

Now, while the two dominant elements in

the Keswick scheme, the infilling and its conditions, appear to me entirely unwarranted by the Bible, and supported only by inconclusive experimental proofs, it is quite within the Bible's teaching that a carnally minded Christian repels the influence of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, if he is really a child of God, God does not forsake him; and if the Holy Spirit ever becomes his familiar Counsellor and Friend, he will not have "received the Spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith." The Holy Spirit, we may be sure, all the while does the best he can with us. It is he, and only he, not any preliminary operation of our own wills, that "makes us free from the law of sin and death." Yet it remains for us to inquire whether we are but passive under his transforming touch, merely "broken and empty vessels" to be filled from that exhaustless fountain.

3. A passive reception of a supreme gift of the Spirit would be entirely in line with an operation so indescribable and indefinite in character as that Keswick infilling. At this final point the characteristic deficiency of the



Keswick teaching is particularly marked. Passivity is emphasized. It is scrupulously insisted that "sanctification is not by the law." What Chalmers called "the expulsive power of a new affection" is allowed an uncertain office; yet holiness, they say, cannot come by love toward God on the Christian's part, but solely by the direct operation of the Spirit upon the soul. The most adequate statement about the required passivity, so far as my reading of recent writers goes, is the following quotation from the report of an union meeting in Oxford, England, — the meeting afterwards held in Keswick.

"The part of the clay is to be put into the potter's hands, and to abide there passively. The potter must do all the work. The clay cannot make itself into a beautiful vessel, neither can it help to do it: it must lie passive in the potter's hands and know no will but his, and he will then mould and fashion it by his own skill into just such a vessel as he sees fit. . . . Our part is simply in faith to abandon ourselves to his working, — which is what consecration implies, — and then trust him to do it all." This is admirable in spirit.



It even sounds well; but it is not the teaching of the New Testament. The New Testament never teaches by so much as one word that the Holy Spirit enters the heart of a Christian when he finds the door held open, and then by main force subdues sin or infuses righteousness. The New Testament nowhere teaches that, in receiving help from God, the soul of a believer is passive, merely acted upon. Christ's own word for it is, "Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth." The accepting and using of truth is our act. Paul's paradoxical exhortation is as complete an account of what takes place as we can hope for: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." He exhorts the Romans, "Yield your members servants to righteousness unto sanctification" [R. V.]. His description of their estate is, "Now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification." His word to Timothy is bolder and more explicit still: "If one cleanse himself, . . . he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful for the master, prepared for every good

work." It would be easy to continue indefinitely the citations of passages which assume or say that the believer has a part with the Holy Spirit in his own sanctification; these given ought to be enough.

But the most decisive consideration is drawn from the fact that, according to our Lord, the Holy Spirit is not sent on errands of his own, he is not to speak of his own affairs, but to "testify of Christ." All that the Father has is Christ's; therefore Christ might well promise, as the utmost the Spirit can do for us, "He shall take of mine and show it unto you." Display of all that God has given to Christ implies no mere passivity on our part, but alert attention, lively appreciation, eager acceptance, and energetic use. The mark which we are to press toward is the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. The Keswick doctrine is departing strangely from the Scriptural representation of the Holy Spirit's place, though it is now more guarded on this point, when it puts the Spirit in the place of Christ as an object of longing, of trust, or of love. It is "the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ" which makes us "free from the law of sin and death." And

if we are to "reckon ourselves to be dead to sin," we are also to reckon ourselves "alive to God in Christ Jesus." If in any valid and good sense we are dead, it is because "our life is hidden with Christ in God." Christ, not the Holy Spirit, is the Way, the Truth, the Life. Only Christ is Christianity.

Now in teaching that faith does its utmost when it does nothing but passively accept a mystic infilling of the Holy Spirit, the Keswick teachers exhibit an anomaly that makes one wonder. They would exalt the offices of the Holy Spirit, and the Bible is never out of their hands; yet they make no clear account of the fact that according to the Bible the all-inclusive office of the Spirit for human souls is to minister the truth. If we are begotten again, it is by the word of truth; if we are sanctified, it is through the truth; if we help others, it is by sharing with them the ministry of the truth; and the "truth as it is in Jesus" is the pre-eminent instrument of the Spirit. By this means all is done which can be done for us, or through us. By the truth the mind is informed. Through true ideas the heart is purified and warmed. By clear

views of life's proper aims the energies are evoked, the will directed. Intellect, sensibility, will, all the powers a human soul has, are animated and regulated by the Holy Spirit's ministration of truth. We have no other faculties for him to act upon, no other powers for him to employ; but these powers and faculties he makes use of in this way, and, so far as we have means of knowing, in this way alone. When, therefore, the Spirit of God has brought us into obedience to Christ, what more can that alleged mystic infilling do? The New Testament suggests nothing further; an absolutely true and everywhere accepted account of man's faculties excludes everything further. Nevertheless, the anomalous Keswick teaching insists that, as a sheer supplement to all attainments in intellect, heart, and loyalty to Christ, the Holy Spirit adds an occult "power," for which there is really no lodging-place, no storehouse in the human soul, no supplemental faculty to work through. Inevitably this notion, when fixed, issues in making the Holy Spirit, instead of Christ, the object of trust and desire.

It is safe to say also that the doctrine which

makes the Holy Spirit alone active, for the sake of exalting his work, in making man passive disparages the work of the Spirit. What we need is to have all our powers fitly engaged. Conduct follows choice; choice selects a motive; the Holy Spirit can give force to motives. We need from the Spirit so engaging a view of Christ that we will choose Christ. A theory which denies to man all share in making himself holy denies the Holy Spirit's most important share in this work. Of course, if a Christian man's sins were due to demoniacal possession, to the entire mastery of his faculties by a malignant power without the man's acquiescence, then a benign power would have to cast the demon out without the man's co-operation. As the case stands, it surely is not the Spirit's office to suppress a Christian's powers, but to enlist them for Christ. Thus the Spirit himself is honored; for his highest office is thus performed. Faith must work by love, but it must work. To make a renewed man passive in spiritual gains is both morally impracticable and spiritually undesirable.

The discomfiture of so many well meant endeavors is pitiful to record. The Keswick scheme now has the field practically to itself. What it can achieve is yet to be put beyond dispute, and such a test cannot be hurried. Many generations have sought to elaborate a theory and formulate a process of that Christian living which would be unequivocally the best and attainable. I trust that the story of those ventures, and the charting of the rocks on which the ventures have gone to wreck, will also be accepted as at least well meant. The story is indeed as friendly as a flaring beacon lit in the night, or a doleful bell tolling somewhere near by in the impenetrable mist. It is but an unpretending service to tend the beacon and toll the bell, a lonely and dismal service ; but it cannot well be spared. If any-one thinks it is not needed, it will be those, alas ! who are afloat and in danger.

#### THE PARADOX RESOLVED

How anomalous the state of facts ! The customary conviction that the Holy Spirit abides with all believers and aids them when

they are ready to be aided, is accepted on every hand as true so far as it goes; whereas the ideal presented at Keswick is not the highest, and the measures proposed want Biblical support. And yet the churches are deficient in spiritual power, while the Keswick leaders, at least, are eminent for spiritual-mindedness and spiritual helpfulness. Many are ready to say of them, as one who afterward became a leader among them said, "They have something which I never had." The objections have been stated; but to what do they owe their success?

We may assure ourselves that their merits are not due to their mistakes. We need be imitators of no man except as he is the imitator of Christ. Now, these good men have conspicuously met the two Scriptural conditions of spiritual gains; namely, faith and fidelity. A man's spiritual rank may be soberly judged according to "the measure of faith." "We have access through Jesus Christ by faith into this grace wherein we stand," whatever that standing is. Fidelity also is a measure of spiritual gains. This is a distinctive teaching of our Lord. More than one parable stated



that he who had been faithful with little should be rewarded with more, or what to the mind of our Lord was the same thing, to him that hath shall be given. Unfaithfulness is fatal; "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh it away." Faithfulness is rewarded with more to do: "Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." If the Keswick men are of notable faith and faithfulness as they seem to be, their notable piety and usefulness also are accounted for as fruit of obeying the Bible's requirement, and need no occult or unusual explanation.

Experience also affords us light. The goodness in these men does not guarantee the goodness of all that is in them. And what is this but the story of every good man's life? Who is faultless? or knows everything? or does all the good which he sets out to do? Can we learn nothing whatever from these sagacious saints of modern type, because they happen to lay stress on what we hardly believe in? Why, then, we shall be hard to suit with teachers; or, what is worse, it will not be safe for us to learn from anybody, since every



teacher who thinks is quite sure to be wrong about something.

Another illuminating fact of experience is that sanguine people always take a new idea for more than it is worth, and are sure to press a new method beyond what it will bear. A promising theory cannot be started in science but foolhardy scholars will bank on it, and risk their all in a "wild cat" venture with it. No new theory of disease and cure can be proposed but medical men will adopt it offhand with a confidence equalled only by their want of confidence in older theories and practice, until, as a distinguished physician remarked, the only good that can come of their zeal is that we know all the sooner how much or how little the new remedy is worth. The most astounding political movement in modern history, the French Revolution, began with a boundless enthusiasm for political speculation. This enthusiasm started among scholars and aristocrats and spread through all ranks, gave the revolutionary armies strength to turn back the armies of Europe, gave Napoleon, who set up for the leader in modern politics, the resource

of an inexhaustible French fidelity to ideas; but it drenched every place of execution with the blood of the noblest Frenchmen, appalled the world with the spectacle of the Red Terror, next at its own danger, and in the end left Europe exhausted by the effort to withstand French ideas fired from cannon, charging on horseback, and driven home with bayonets. The story of every largely planned campaign for higher living is much the same story over again. New notions awaken boundless expectation, stir people to extraordinary effort, half intoxicate them with spiritual ecstasies, but bring in their train disappointment so bitter, disaster so frequent, that by and by the churches are glad to forget that these projects were ever advocated and tried. The familiar strategy and tactics may not be so brilliant, but are easier to understand, and their defeats easier to survive. The ardor of the Keswick movement has not worn itself out. The movement is fresh and novel to the multitude. Especially as transferred to Northfield, and modified there, it claims a degree of attention and sympathy quite unprecedented in America. But if the movement long survives, this will be

a new thing in history. It will be due to sleepless watchfulness against fanaticisms, and, what is more important, against extravagance of claims hardly amounting to fanaticism; above all, it will be due to an unsparing surgery which cuts out all detected gangrene of unbiblical error in doctrine, aim, or plan. The undeniable success of the movement thus far it owes in part to the blaze and iridescence with which, like a new and glorious sun, it is dawning on ingenuous minds.

A final fact, very helpful toward understanding the success of the Keswick movement, is that for many persons life normally advances by crises. Some are happy in a calm and nearly uniform development; but it is the distinction of others that their lives embrace long periods of unnoticed preparation, like the quiet gathering of volcanic forces, which end in earthquake and explosion. These souls know that something has happened to them, and they have something to tell about. But the critical change in a few cases may be as swift as an avalanche, and yet soft as the gentle fall of snow from the skies. The crisis has arrived;

the crisis has passed. The result is manifest to all, and invites belief that the only normal progress in character is by long graceful leaps and bounds. As well insist that the only true method is to advance at a snail's pace, or, slower still, to grow as plants grow. The Keswick people seem to have passed through notable crises, oftener quiet than violent; if other Christians are almost as exemplary as they, then there are some very good Christians who never knew a crisis, who hardly became aware that they were born again, but merely found themselves alive, and who have grown to their present height without "growing pains." Some, indeed, whom all their brethren praise do not venture to believe that they are growing. There are no pencil-marks on the door-casings to measure spiritual growth by, and they have never tried those carefully thought out gymnastics of the Keswick school, which make a good many spiritual athletes feel stronger every day. They are farthest of all from claiming to have reached the highest life; but that life shall yet be theirs; and all things present and to come are theirs, for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. To serve God,

to be upheld by him, and to know something about peace with him, this is even now their lot, and they would not exchange it for everything beside.

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*



## APPENDIX





## APPENDIX

### LIMITED PROMISES<sup>1</sup>

**H**OWEVER obvious the disproof by experience of the claim that all graces and attainments are open to all Christians, some will stand by the claim. Against all odds they will have one defence: every refutation not only from the general teaching of experience, but from detailed study of the Bible, they will still meet with the challenge, "Have we not the promises?" It is a challenge not to be evaded. We must consider whether indeed they "have the promises."

The promises of the Bible hold good for those who received them, but not for us, unless, from the nature of the case, they are applicable to us. Most readers of the Bible take the opposite for granted; namely, that every promise holds for everybody in absence of proof that it does not. But when between men one makes a promise to a second, a third does not think it is made to him unless he can prove that it is. Can any one give a reason why the Bible's promises should be outside this rule? They were given to ancient persons; does it not need proof that they apply also to modern persons? In most cases

<sup>1</sup> Mostly reprinted from *The Examiner*.

reasons for accepting the promises are abundant and obvious. Perhaps this is why we fall into the way of thinking that they are so in all cases. But it is a mistake. Before we can claim a promise we must find a sufficient reason, obvious or obscure, to justify our claim. Too many devout souls blame themselves because the promises are not fulfilled to them. There are evils, they think, which, like a certain kind of demons, come not out but by prayer and fasting; and so these good people are convinced that they have not tormented themselves enough with self-denial, or forced the hand of God by a sufficient strain of faith. Is it not worth asking whether, after all, they have not been laying hold of promises never intended for them?

It is clear that the New Testament does not set forth its promises in the laboriously and obscurely precise terms of a written contract. They are always plain, often boundless. For example, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you;" "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it." But was there ever a Christian who found either promise invariably fulfilled without qualification? Jesus accepted a limit to the fulfilment of his own prayers: "Not my will but thine be done." Such a limit shuts off from fulfilment no end of prayers. Jesus knew that it would prevent the fulfilment of the prayer which he persisted in. Paul prayed without recollecting, so far as his account goes, to say, "Thy will be done." He prayed thrice that the "thorn" might be drawn from his flesh; and the thorn remained. The promises, while unlimited in form,

were not unlimited in fulfilment. The scope of a promise was, "Ask what you please;" the scope of the answer was, "I give what I please." I ask notice to three promises limited in fulfilment, although not limited in form. The limitation in each case is to persons, but also more or less in objects.

First, no limit in time is set to the promise that the Holy Spirit would guide the disciples into all the truth. No limit is mentioned of persons to be so guided. In form it is a promise to all times, as much as to those times, a promise of new revelations now, if then. But it was a promise to those eleven disciples; how show that it was intended for others than the eleven? Certainly Paul claims that absolutely new truth was given to him; if any one claims that new truth is promised to us, he must show the insufficiency for us of the revelation in Christ nineteen hundred years ago; also what his new truth is; finally, that what he takes to be such is both true and new. It might be as hard to prove that new revelations would be desirable as that they are actual. If to all the turmoil of conflicting interpretations of the old revelation had to be added the incessant weighing of claims set up for new apostles and new prophets, we would need not only that ancient gift of "discerning the spirits," but still more the warning laid, be it remembered, upon the eager prophets themselves: "Let all things be done decently and in order."

A second promise, repeated many times and in various forms, is the promise that miracles would be

granted to faith. No time limit was set to miracles. In form this promise holds to-day; but it was actually given to persons of an ancient day. What ground can we show for taking it as a promise to us also? Unless we can show ground, it must not be extended to any beyond those who heard it. We need not shiver at Hume's reproach that Christian doctrines are so absurd that miracles were needed to prove them true. Christian doctrine shines by its own light. Yet I submit that, manifestly true, upliftingly true, savingly true, as is the doctrine that God might fitly provide redemption through his Son, still it would have been unwarrantable in the last degree to accept any man, to accept even Jesus, as the Christ, unless this supernatural person came with supernatural attestation. Many think to deliver Christianity from taint of superstition by disclaiming miracles for Christ; but it would be the wildest superstition to believe in a Christ without miracles. Yet this attestation once given supremely in our Lord's resurrection, it was thenceforth well for the world that miracles should cease. Christianity must not become a gazing-stock. Use must not stale the very significance of the miracles. They must not, like the loaves and fishes, take the place of toil, and by undermining industry destroy civilization and virtue itself. Much as they were needed at first, it is important that miracles should not recur until the sun of this dispensation draws near its setting.

Why, then, take to ourselves the promise that the prayer of faith will save the sick? Why reproach ourselves with the fact that our prayers do not save

the sick? Is there any fitness in pulling the blanket of this promise over our shivering faith? Such occurrences were needed for a time, but could be borne with even for a time only at cost of disadvantage so serious that Jesus over and over charged those for whom he had wrought his wonders not to spread the tale abroad. Let us not forget that it was the raising of Lazarus which precipitated the determination of our Lord's foes, and led Caiaphas to give his fatal counsel.

Thirdly, the promise that the Holy Spirit would give "power" to the preaching of apostles was fulfilled for them once and abundantly. No one should wonder that zealous preachers, who are devoted with all their hearts to the saving of men, attempt to get the same power in the same way. No wonder that, consecrated, single-minded, endued with the Spirit as they are, owing so much to the Spirit as they do, they venture to apply the same promise to all preachers, to extend it to the entire Church. But how can we justify a claim that the promise of one extraordinary Pentecost amounted to a promise of innumerable Pentecosts? How justify a virtual inference that the "diversity of gifts" has come to an end, and that in our day all can be "apostles, prophets, teachers," preachers eloquent as Spurgeon, or leaders masterful as Moody? If certain of us have become mighty ministers, very many more of us, to whom the mighty ones have told what they consider the secret of their power and have set forth the steps by which they climbed to such heights, many more

attempt the same process with faith and devotion, but fail as completely as happier souls have succeeded. There seems to be a limit to man's control over God. We are responsible for accomplishing such tasks only as he has laid on us, and for the fulfilment, too, of such promises alone as we may and ought to claim, and are able to show that we can claim, for ourselves. Those who humbly and reverently disclaim all share in their own distinguished successes, who cry down their own abilities and cry up the work of the Holy Spirit in them, for the sake of giving hope to their fellow-preachers, these honored brethren would be doing the rest of us but kindness if they bore in mind that the fall from high hopes is a hard fall; that superb examples are disheartening if we are told to emulate them but cannot, and that promises misapplied are hurtful in proportion to the vastness of what they offer.

But there is one invitation to prayer wide enough for us all always: "Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." We may at least tell our desires to God, and be kept by his peace.

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